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THE COURT OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.
VOL. I.

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the Queen, as she appeared
in 1801.

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Being the Secret Memoirs of Madame
Ducrest ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

In Three Volumes
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PREFACE.

IN venturing to write a work, the idea of which would never have entered my mind had I not yielded to the repeated entreaties of my friends, I am not actuated by any desire of acquiring celebrity. I am fully sensible of my deficiency in everything that constitutes an author, and my innate indolence of disposition would, moreover, prevent me from encountering the many vexations reserved for every female who ventures upon the dangerous career of literary pursuits. Having had much intercourse with the higher classes of society, with the most celebrated characters of our time, the most distinguished artists and the most esteemed men of letters, I have treasured up a variety of recollections which may not be found altogether uninteresting.

Having enjoyed the intimate society of the Empress Josephine after her divorce, I am more particularly induced to take up my pen with the view of furnishing *correct* details respecting her domestic life; she will be the principal theme of my Memoirs; I shall only relate what I saw; and this task will be

the more agreeable to my feelings, as it cannot fail to create fresh regret for the loss of that extraordinary woman. Many writers have flattered her when she was seated upon the throne; I shall merely relate what I know of her since she descended from it, and I may confidently hope that no one will call my narrative in question.

Those persons who were not acquainted with the Empress Josephine will find my account of her in some degree exaggerated; those, on the contrary, who have been attached to her household, will very justly observe that I have kept within the truth. To form a proper estimate of her worth would require a previous knowledge of the many traits of goodness which have so much endeared her memory. She took so much pains to conceal her acts of benevolence that the greater part are still buried in oblivion. Many of those upon whom she conferred a service have forgotten what *the usurper's wife* had done for them! Her conduct towards me on all occasions was so amiable and considerate that it claims my unbounded gratitude. In my anxiety to fulfil so sacred an obligation, and in the hope of adding some colours to her portrait, I yield to the wishes of my friends.

In spite, however, of the universal mania, I shall avoid saying much upon matters purely personal; my misfortunes, however severe they may be, would only interest a very limited number of persons. I prefer

passing over that bitter period of my life where I found no consolation except such as I derived from the endearments of friendship, and shall only remember the past to bless those who have alleviated my sufferings. Any inaccuracy in my narrative will be altogether involuntary on my part, and I solicit beforehand the forgiveness of those whom I may have occasion to name. I may sometimes err in point of dates; the constant succession of misfortunes and of occurrences that have disturbed the peace of my existence for the last fifteen years will plead my excuse for having occasionally confounded the periods of events. Of this I am quite satisfied, that I have never distorted an honourable trait in any one's character; in short, I take up my pen with the utmost diffidence, and must venture to hope I may meet with that indulgence of which I stand so much in need.

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Josephine

SECRET COURT MEMOIRS.

COURT OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

CHAPTER I.

French Emigrants in London. — Their Means of Subsistence. — Our Society. — Cramer. — Viotti. — Jarnowick. — Subscriptions. — The Prince of Wales. — The Duc de Berri. — The Duc d'Orléans. — Vicomte de Marin. — Dussek. — George III. and Louis XVIII.

THE most distant period to which my recollection extends is the year 1794. I was then quite a child; but events of little importance and circumstances of trivial interest fix themselves indelibly in the youthful mind, which is keenly susceptible to impressions of every kind. Being born and bred in emigration, I was brought into close contact with many individuals now at the head of the French Government. Having been accustomed from infancy to revere the Princes for whom we had renounced our country, I could never after hear their names pronounced without experiencing a very natural emotion; they revived in my memory the long and cruel sufferings of my

parents. For these illustrious exiles I always cherished the respect due to them, and to the sentiments I imbibed at this early age I must doubtless attribute the repugnance I subsequently felt at the thought of accepting any place dependent on the family who superseded the Bourbons. I positively refused the situation of Dame du Palais to the Queen of Naples (the wife of Joseph Bonaparte). A relation of mine, who urgently solicited the situation for me, obtained the promise that I should have it as soon as I attained my sixteenth year. I wept so bitterly when she informed me of the success of her application, that she plainly saw my scruples would not be easily overcome. My resolution continued unchanged, and the place which had been the object of numerous solicitations was given to another. I should not thus notice an affair which is entirely of a personal nature, were it not to shew that in speaking favourably of the Empress Josephine I cannot justly be accused of partiality.

Before I enter upon the circumstances which introduced me to the Empress, I must go back to the years of my early childhood, the only interval of my existence that has been exempt from misery, because I was not then of an age to feel it. At a more advanced period of life I should have lamented the distressed situation of my parents, who were suddenly deprived of a handsome fortune of which they made

an honourable use ; I should have pined to see my mother reduced to the necessity of exerting her musical talents for the support of my father and myself ; the most distinguished musical professors in England assembled at my mother's house for the purpose of giving concerts. On these occasions I was noticed and caressed, and therefore was happy.

Among the persons of note who visited my parents were Dussek and Cramer. Though rivals, they were intimate friends. They listened to one another's performances with mutual pleasure, and each readily rendered justice to the other, as the following anecdote will shew. Dussek having on one occasion arrived later than usual, Cramer asked him how it happened.

"I have been busy composing a new *rondo*," he replied ; "I was very well pleased with it, and yet, though perfectly satisfied with the result of my labour, I have thrown the manuscript into the fire."

"But why?"

"I will tell you I had introduced a confounded passage which I practised for several hours without being able to execute it. I suspected you would play it offhand, and I was determined not to submit to such a mortification."

This was said in the hearing of more than thirty persons. Such instances of liberality are not often met with in individuals following the same profes-

sion, and the circumstance, from its singularity, appears to me worth recording.

Viotti and Jarnowick, the two celebrated violinists, attended the concerts above alluded to, as did also Vicomte de Marin, who was fortunate enough to possess a resource which relieved him from the necessity of depending on English charity. Many emigrants, being destitute of all means of support, were obliged to hold out their hands to their country's enemies. How much more honourable was the feeling of those who preferred maintaining themselves by their own exertions! To accept an asylum was, I thought, all that Frenchmen ought to have done; and to grant that asylum was but an act of justice on the part of England, whose banished Sovereign had, at a former period, been hospitably received in France. Thus George III., in the name of royalty and the nation, acquitted the debt of James II. Like Louis XVIII., James found safety and protection in his adversity, but he did not, like the former, exhibit to the admiration of the world an example of simplicity and self-denial. Our Royal Family could dispense with luxury when their countrymen wanted bread. They denied themselves all superfluities in order to maintain the faithful servants who accompanied them in their exile; thus proving in England, as they have since done in France, that every virtue may be united on a throne.

At this period many individuals of exalted rank were distinguished for their noble conduct in adversity. In them, misfortune served only to develop qualities which in the vortex of prosperity might possibly have lain dormant. With few exceptions they are now all reinstated in their honours and dignities. Perhaps they sometimes call to mind our social meetings, where ranks were forgotten and confounded, and where confidence and friendship were not mere empty words. They must, I think, occasionally regret their happy poverty, and the cordial feeling which lives only in their recollection.

The English, perhaps from motives of policy, received the emigrants kindly, and supplied them with everything that could tend to assuage their misery. The Prince of Wales in particular manifested the liveliest interest in their behalf, and his name appeared at the head of all the subscriptions opened for their relief. He was on terms of intimate friendship with the Ducs de Berri and d'Orléans. Previous to the Revolution, the Prince felt an ardent wish to spend some time in France, but he could not gratify his inclination, the heir to the throne of England being prohibited from quitting the country without the consent of Parliament. The Prince of Wales did not apply for this consent, because he knew very well it would not be granted.

Jarnowick, whom I have mentioned above, was not

more remarkable for his talent as a performer on the violin than for an original vein of humour, of which the following anecdote is characteristic. He gave a concert which was very fully attended. On the commencement of a *concerto* which he had to perform, the company continued conversing together, while their whispering was mingled with clattering of teacups and saucers.* Jarnowick turned to the orchestra and desired the performers to stop.

"These people," said he, "know nothing about music. I will give them something better suited to their taste. Anything is good enough for these drinkers of warm water."

So saying, he immediately commenced the air, "*J' ai du bon tabac*," and, strange as it may appear, he was overwhelmed with applause; his second performance was listened to with attention, and the circulation of the teacups was suspended until its conclusion.

* It was customary to serve the company with tea throughout the whole evening, during the performances as well as in the intervening pauses. The waiters were directed to distribute refreshments, and they did their duty conscientiously.

CHAPTER II.

Journey to Hamburg. — Lady Fitzgerald. — Madame de Genlis and Madame Récamier. — Lord Edward Fitzgerald. — The Duke of Richmond. — Prince Ferdinand Louis of Prussia. — French Society. — De Rivarol. — Madame Chevalier, the French Actress. — Paul I., Emperor of Russia. — Residence at Altona. — Princesse de Vaudemont. — Garat and Rode.

WE quitted London for Hamburg, where I saw Lady Edward Fitzgerald, who was then as celebrated for her beauty as Madame Récamier subsequently was in Paris. Madame de Genlis has in her Memoirs dwelt so fully on the merits of her interesting pupil, that little remains to be said of her by any one else; yet I cannot pass over in silence her admirable conduct at the time her unfortunate lord was arrested. To gain access to his prison she remained thirty-six hours concealed in a peat-house. She quitted her hiding-place exhausted by cold and fatigue; but she had the happiness of conveying consolation to her husband, who was condemned for high treason.*

* The sentence of attainder has since been reversed, and his property restored to his family.

She was the object of universal admiration, and her portrait was sold in all the print shops. Her extraordinary courage, her exquisite beauty, and the many amiable qualities that adorned her, made a deep impression on the heart of the Duke of Richmond, and he offered to marry her as soon as she should lay aside her widow's weeds. Lady Fitzgerald, however, refused him; but afterwards gave her hand to Mr. Pitcairn, the Consul of the United States at Hamburg.

During our stay in that city, we were on terms of intimacy with Prince Ferdinand Louis of Prussia.* He had been sent from Berlin by the King, who was offended at his disorderly course of life. To banish him from a capital where he was the subject of general observation, was certainly not the best way to mend him. At Hamburg, where he was alone without control, and surrounded by young companions still more dissipated than himself, he often lost sight of the dignity due to his rank. However, he compensated for all his follies by extreme courage, noble sentiments, wit, information of no common kind, and singular talent for the piano. His tutor was the Abbé Raynal, and he received his musical instruction from Mozart. The Prince was a pleasing composer, and his execution might be considered wonderful at that period. His features were regular and hand-

* He was killed at Saalfeld. He refused to surrender to a quartermaster of Hussars, who stabbed him.

some. In the society of women his manners were gallant and agreeable, but he was apt to drink freely and behave disorderly in the company of men. He got involved in quarrels with the city guard; rescued children from the flames in the frequent fires which broke out in Hamburg; associated with the players; and gave his money freely to poor families who were recommended to his charity; in short, he was at once an object of fear, love, and pity. He could bear to hear the truth, and when told of his faults he would frankly acknowledge them and promise to avoid them in future. But after the lapse of a few days all his follies and extravagances were repeated. This mixture of good and bad, sensibility, frivolity, gaiety, and gravity, rendered the young Prince more like a Frenchman than a German. He was, indeed, fond of the French, and associated very much with them. M. de ——— once reproached him for being too much in the company of individuals noted for their Jacobinical opinions (those who wore the tri-coloured cockade).

“I like their sentiments,” said Ferdinand, “for, though a Prince, I am on the *popular* side.” “Take care, monseigneur, not to get on the side of the *populace*,” rejoined the other. This observation, which conveyed an allusion to a recent unfortunate event, ought to have been a lesson to the individual to whom it was addressed.

M. de Rivarol, so celebrated for his wit, was also in Hamburg at the period here alluded to. He was a very late riser; and every morning before he was up he received a crowd of idle young men, whose vanity was gratified if they could boast of being acquainted with a man of such superior talent. M. de Rivarol held a levée in the strict sense of the term. Adulation was carried to the extreme, and all esteemed themselves happy in receiving a kind word from one who was fond of amusing himself at other people's absurdities; he loved to indulge in satirical allusions, which were not always understood by those against whom they were directed, and by whom they were sometimes repeated, with an air of complacency, at evening parties. M. de Rivarol used to say that people visited him for the purpose of polishing their wit. That he should so freely have indulged this dangerous habit of satire was a subject of regret. He possessed talents which were calculated to raise him to the highest distinction; but indolence and other bad qualities checked him in the career which he might have honourably pursued. For a few years he was the object of praise and adulation, and now his name is scarcely ever mentioned.

Madame Chevalier, an actress at the Théâtre Français, was at this time the idol of the good people of Hamburg. Her beauty, her agreeable voice, joined to her modest and graceful manner, secured her the

most brilliant success. She received advantageous proposals from St. Petersburg, which she accepted. I attended her farewell performance, and though I was then only six years of age, the comic solemnity of the affair made a deep impression on my mind. The theatre was crowded. At the termination of the last piece, Madame Chevalier advanced to the front of the stage, and attempted to sing some verses which had been composed for the occasion; however, *excessive emotion* disabled her from executing her task, and her husband, who rushed forward to support her, informed the audience that she had been taken suddenly ill. Great confusion prevailed in the theatre; the ladies declared that the scene had been got up for the occasion; that nervous fits were all out of date, etc., etc. As to the gentlemen, they were disconsolate at the thought of losing the *lovely creature*. The old Senators, in their full black velvet suits, enormous ruffles, and curled wigs, dried their tears with as sentimental an air as the French fops. They even carried their testimonials of affection so far as to throw purses full of gold at the feet of the interesting actress. The emigrants, who had not quite so much money to spare, were content to present her with a crown. Similar scenes often occur nowadays; but in Madame Chevalier's time people were not quite so liberal as they now are, and it was thought ridiculous to bestow on a well-paid actress testimonials of enthusiasm such as

would be lavished on the hero who might have delivered his country. Next morning the public seemed to wonder how they could have been drawn into such an absurdity.

Madame Chevalier subsequently became the mistress of Paul I., when she sold places under the Russian Government; and in spite of all her shew of fine feeling, bargained for a few roubles to get people exiled to Siberia. Being hated in Russia for the cruelties of which she was the instrument, she was obliged to take to flight on the death of the Emperor. She returned to Poland, where her pretty face turned the head of a rich palatine, who got her divorced from her husband, and married her. What afterwards became of her I know not, but certainly her existence must have been embittered by the recollection of the many acts of oppression and cruelty of which she was the cause. Her remorse has no doubt amply avenged her victims.

The pleasant little town of Altona, which is separated from Hamburg only by a long alley of trees, also afforded an asylum to many French refugees. The Princesse de Vaudemont* had a very agreeable residence at Altona, and she erected a neat little theatre in which comedies and operas were performed. It was frequented by all the distinguished foreigners in the town. The Princess was not handsome, but a

* Of the family of Montmorency-Nivelle.

fine figure, a luxuriant head of hair, dignified manners, a large fortune, and a noble name, were sufficient to attract admirers, while her excellent heart secured her a numerous circle of friends. She was often hasty and even harsh ; * but she speedily recovered her good humour, and never refused to grant any service she had power to render. Her hospitable reception of her exiled countrymen helped them to forget their absence from their native home.† Since her return to Paris she has continued to lead the same sort of life, protecting and encouraging the arts, and administering aid and consolation to the distressed. In short, she is worthy of the name of Montmorency.

Two of the most esteemed among the French emigrants were Garat and Rode. Their admirable musical talent, pleasing manners, and original turn of mind were alike appreciated by the French and the Germans. Their music and their conversation were listened to with equal delight, and their presence was always sufficient to animate a party. They had an odd way of relating humorous incidents, which they always pretended had occurred to themselves. They were on a footing of the closest intimacy, and they mutually vouched for the truth of each other's

* M. de Rivarol used to compare her to nature: sometimes rugged, often beautiful, and always beneficent.

† Among the number were Monseigneur de Clermont-Tonnerre, Bishop of Châlons, now Archbishop of Toulouse and a Cardinal; and M. Joseph de Caraman, Prince Chimay.

stories, with such an air of gravity that people were at length persuaded to believe them. The following is an anecdote of which Garat declared himself to have been the hero, and which he asserted was true :

Having been arrested at the commencement of the Revolution, he used to amuse himself in his captivity by singing almost all day long. He used to say that these vocal exercises had greatly increased the natural flexibility of his voice ; the rest of the prisoners used to assemble in the corridor or under his windows to listen to him. One day one of them entered his apartment, and, after saluting him with every mark of respect, said :

“ I understand, monsieur, you are the incomparable Garat.”

“ Yes, monsieur.”

“ Your talent is prodigious.”

“ Monsieur ! —”

“ Do not interrupt me. Your talent, I say, monsieur, is prodigious ; and no one can dispute your right to the title of god of music. I am your greatest admirer.”

“ Monsieur, you honour me.”

“ I am competent to form an estimate of your abilities, for I devote a great deal of my time to the enchanting art in which you excel.”

“ Are you a musician, monsieur ?” said Garat, not seeing the drift of all these compliments.

“Yes, monsieur, we are colleagues ; therefore you will admit that it is very natural I should address myself to you to solicit an important service.”

“What can I do for you ?”

“The Vandals, who are now in possession of power, oppose everything that tends to promote the progress of art. To devote oneself to the study of it is, in their eyes, a heinous offence ; and therefore, in a case of great difficulty, I have presumed to address myself to you.”

“I am at your service.”

“An unfortunate accident has disabled me from cultivating my talent ; it depends upon you to restore me to my favourite pursuits.”

“How ?”

“A man like you cannot be ignorant of anything relating to music ; therefore, I have come to ask you to put my instrument in order, and I will lend it you as soon as it is fit to be played upon.”

With these words the stranger drew from under his mantle, and presented to Garat, a little instrument called a serinette, used for teaching canary birds to sing.

Garat burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, in which he was joined by several persons who rushed in to inquire the cause of his merriment.

The owner of the serinette, amazed at the general hilarity, retired, deeply mortified, and from that time became the declared enemy of Garat, whom he distinguished by the title of the “charlatan.”

CHAPTER III.

Our Departure for Copenhagen. — Reception of my Family by the Prince Royal. — The Princess of Augustenburg. — Madame Brown. — M. de Coninck. — M. Monod. — Portrait of King Christian. — Reception of M. Grouvelle, Ambassador from the French Republic. — The Prince and Princess Royal. — M. Lebrun.

THE number of emigrants of various opinions, who thronged to Hamburg and Altona, made a residence in those towns very disagreeable to people who wished to live free of discussion. My parents resolved to withdraw themselves from those coteries, in which a phrase or a word frequently became the ground of anger and dispute. They set out for Copenhagen, where they had reason to hope for a wider field for the exercise of their talents, and where they were sure of enjoying greater tranquillity. They were most graciously received by the Prince Royal (the present King), his amiable sister, the Princess of Augustenburg, and numerous individuals of high rank, who generously protected misfortune without regard to the causes which produced it. The number of French in Copenhagen was limited, and they lived

very agreeably in a city where, the arts not being generally cultivated, all whose talents were calculated to enliven society were sure of being well received.

My parents became intimately acquainted with Madame Brown, whose talents and acquirements are extolled by Madame de Staël,* and also with M. de Coninck, whose vast fortune enabled him freely to indulge his benevolent disposition. The following traits bear ample evidence of the excellence of his heart:

M. de Coninck, about twenty years before we knew him, arrived at Copenhagen with one louis in his pocket, and some letters of recommendation to one or two good commercial houses. A merchant to whom he was thus introduced, being much pleased with him, engaged him as clerk, and afterwards gave him a share in the business. His intelligence, rigid probity, and great knowledge of commercial affairs speedily enabled him to amass a brilliant fortune, and he was appointed banker to the Court.

Whenever he had reason to be well satisfied with any young man in his employment, he threw ad-

* These two ladies lived on a footing of close friendship at Rome and Geneva. Madame Brown had a daughter distinguished for literary genius. At the age of thirteen she wrote verses in several languages, which she spoke with as much fluency as her mother-tongue. She was tall and handsome, and excelled in the art of expressing by animated pantomime every delicate shade of powerful passion. Her attitudes and gestures were full of grace and dignity. Canova several times requested her to stand as his model. She is now Madame de Bombelles.

vantages in his way and enabled him to start in business for himself.

He used often to say to his clerks: "I began with less than you. Be honest and industrious, and you cannot fail to prosper. You shall have all the assistance I can render you."

Such a promise was as good as a written engagement, for M. de Coninck never broke his word. His family consisted of eight children and his excellent wife, who fully shared all his benevolence of feeling. In the choice of husbands for their daughters they were never influenced by the consideration of rank or wealth; good conduct and irreproachable reputation were the only recommendations they desired. One of the young ladies married the tutor who superintended the education of her brothers. M. and Madame de Coninck, having had abundant opportunity of judging of the merits of the gentleman, readily consented to the union; and they did well, for the marriage has proved a singularly happy one. The individual thus preferred to many Danish noblemen was M. Monod, a clergyman in Paris, no less distinguished for his virtues than for high talent in his profession; he is an example for the imitation of all young preachers of the Gospel, the precepts of which are best inculcated by those who do not neglect to practise them.

M. de Coninck generously provided for a lady who was engaged as governess to his daughters. He pur-

chased a house, furnished it, and enabled her to open a boarding school. He placed his daughters and nieces under her care, and her connection soon became so extensive that she was obliged to limit the number of her pupils.

M. de Coninck had in his country-house an unfortunate emigrant, a man of estimable character, whom he established in a warehouse similar to the Petit-Dunkerque. The man ultimately realized a fortune which enabled him to end his days comfortably in France.

The winter of 1797 being unusually severe, Madame de Coninck determined to distribute all the wood in her magnificent hothouses among the poor inhabitants of the village on their estate.

"Whenever I regret the want of a peach," said she, "I console myself with the reflection that the poor have fuel. Thus I shall not be obliged to curtail my usual distributions, or to make fresh demands upon my husband, who saves money only to *lay it well out*."

His *interests* were the blessings of the poor and unfortunate.

On the bombardment of Copenhagen by the English, a subscription was opened for the widows and orphans of the sailors who were victims of the fatal event. M. de Coninck set down his name for 15,000 rix-thalers. We were not in Copenhagen at the time,

but the circumstance was related to us by a friend who was witness to it.

M. de Coninck used to relate several curious anecdotes of King Christian, who was then on the throne. He was looked upon as mad, though he never gave any proof of madness either in the administration of justice or on any other important occasion. He was, I dare say, naturally an eccentric character, and, his temper being ruffled by continual irritation, he had acquired a wildness of manner which gave rise to the idea of his being insane.

He was constantly teased by being forced to do what was disagreeable to him. He disliked sitting long at table, and yet, whenever he drew back his chair and prepared to rise, he was forcibly detained by two Norwegian body-guards who stood behind him. He was fond of chatting with those about him, and yet his attendants were ordered not to answer him when he spoke. Foreigners, indignant at the tyranny to which he was subjected, sometimes ventured to enter into conversation with him. His Ministers addressed him only to reproach him or to order him to do what they wanted. Any individual of the Court to whom he happened to put a question immediately cast down his eyes and withdrew. He was never suffered to be alone, even when he desired it. These continued vexations were, of course, calculated to irritate a man whose mind had been previously harassed

by unfortunate events. He had but very little money at his disposal, but that little he used to distribute among the poor whom he met in his daily walks. I saw him several times, and his countenance and figure are riveted in my memory, partly from the fear with which I was inspired by his reported madness, and partly from my girlish admiration of his red coat trimmed with gold lace. He was decidedly ugly, but his melancholy air could not fail to excite interest.

When he visited the theatre, which he did very frequently, he had before him the score of the opera that was performed, and he followed all the pieces as they were sung. On these occasions he was always attended by a chamberlain, to whom he continually spoke without receiving an answer; a nod of the head was the utmost he ever obtained. He was remarkable for his gallant manners to females. He cultivated choice flowers, which he made up in bouquets and presented them to the ladies, who thanked him only by a curtsy. When he met any ladies in the park, where he frequently walked, he took off his hat and remained uncovered until they were out of sight.

His Ministers wanted him to sign an act which he considered unjust. He refused; they insisted, and at length he took the pen and signed *Christian and Company*, being determined, so he said, not to take upon himself the responsibility of such a law. They

made him renew the signature several times, but he always repeated it in the same manner. He thus prevented the publication of an ordinance prejudicial to the interests of his subjects, to whom he was much attached.* The foreign Ambassadors were always introduced to him, and etiquette required that he should say to each :

“How is the King, your master ?”

M. Grouvelle, who was celebrated for his share in a trial which France must ever deplore, arrived at Copenhagen as Minister of the French Republic. He presented himself to the King in full costume, having a velvet cloak, a hat and feathers, and a tri-coloured scarf. The King, having addressed the usual question to the other members of the diplomatic body, turned suddenly to M. Grouvelle, and said :

* In conformity with an ancient law, the King of Denmark always has at the right door of his carriage, a man on horseback, armed with a loaded musket. His Majesty, having the right of life and death over his subjects, may order this guard to fire on any person for the most trivial offence. There is only one instance recorded of the exercise of this arbitrary privilege, and the victim then was a wretch who had been guilty of the most atrocious calumnies, and had besides been engaged in several swindling transactions, but for want of sufficient proof he could not be condemned. King Christian, in spite of his madness, never thought of exercising this barbarous prerogative. The existence of this odious law in Denmark is the more astonishing, because in that country the punishment of death is not inflicted on criminals; the severest sentence to which they are condemned being hard labour for life. When a person has been unjustly condemned, he is, on his innocence being proved, paraded through the city in one of the King's state carriages. He is preceded by a herald proclaiming the annulment of his sentence, which is likewise published in all the journals. A pension is settled on the unfortunate man by the Government.

“How is the King, your master? . . . I beg your pardon, I mean the Republic, your mistress?”

He then turned his back to the Minister without waiting for an answer.

The Prince and Princess Royal often walked out unattended, carrying their own umbrellas, and in this manner visited the shops in Copenhagen. They were exceedingly simple in their manners, and were beloved by the people. It might, however, have been wished that they had shewn more regard for the King, whom they treated very unkindly. This unfortunate Sovereign died a victim to protracted misery of every kind. He was regretted by the Danes, who knew that he wished to see them happy.

The city of Copenhagen has been frequently ravaged by fires, and is now almost entirely rebuilt. All the new erections are beautiful. The Royal Palace had been completely destroyed by fire shortly before our arrival; and the King then occupied a very mean residence. The port is beautiful, and the neighbouring promenades delightful.

In the streets of Copenhagen I saw a great number of Chinese; they lived in a particular quarter of the city, where they observed all their national customs. They sometimes performed music which appeared very singular to our European ears, accustomed as we are to regular and pleasing melodies. Their singing is a sort of *sotto voce* style, and accompanied on

a sort of guitar having only one string and a long finger-board. On hearing a lady sing who possessed considerable power of execution, one of them asked what she had in her throat which enabled her to produce such beautiful and varied sounds.

At Copenhagen, I heard the famous Lebrun, whose talent as a horn player was then beyond all competition.* He had a letter of introduction to my father, who was a passionate lover of music. Overjoyed at receiving a visit from the distinguished artist, he called me, and presenting me to Lebrun, he said :

“Here, child, is the first horn player in Europe.”

“Oh, papa,” I exclaimed, “then it must be M. Lebrun !”

He was pleased with this remark, which proved how greatly I had heard his talent extolled.†

* At a subsequent period he wished to give a concert in Paris, but was not allowed to do so. Indignant at the injustice of his countrymen, and having lost all the fortune he had acquired by a laborious life, he was reduced to despair, and committed suicide by suffocating himself.

† This reminds me of an observation made by my daughter on Girodet's picture of Galatea. When repeated to the celebrated artist, he said it was one of the best compliments he had ever received. I took my daughter, who was five years of age, to the Salon, and on her attention being directed to the picture, she said, “Mamma, the woman is beautiful, very beautiful, but she looks something like plaster.” This proves how perfectly the painter had succeeded in representing the half-animate figure.

CHAPTER IV.

My Return to France. — Madame de Montesson. — Madame Bonaparte. — Fouché, the Minister of Police. — M. Maret. — Fête on the 1st Vendémiaire. — Death of M. César Ducrest. — M. de Valence. — Général Dumouriez. — Bonaparte Crowned by Madame de Montesson. — Superstition of Bonaparte. — Madame de Montesson's saloon. — MM. de Talleyrand, Maret, de Perignon, Villiers du Terrage, Arnault, Desfaucherets, Garat, Aignan, Coupigny, Despréz, and Isabey.

IN the year 1800, I returned to France with my parents. Like all our companions in misfortune, we hoped, when our names should be erased from the fatal list, to recover some portion of the property we had lost. My father exerted all his efforts to obtain this object. Through the kind interest of Madame de Montesson, he was reinstated in his rights as a *citizen*. Madame Bonaparte, who was on terms of intimacy with our protectress, zealously promoted the business which her friend had at heart. She strongly recommended my father to Fouché, the Minister of Police. The latter was extremely gracious, and re-

quested my father to produce his certificates of residence.

“All the emigrants are doing so,” said he, “and are proving every day that they never quitted France.”

“But I cannot do so, citizen Minister; I have no papers that can be presented to you, except a passport in a false name, which I purchased at Hamburg for twelve francs. I have been eleven years absent from France.”

“What! you have no means of proving that your name has been unjustly inscribed on the list?”

“No.”

“Oh! well, in that case, you shall be erased immediately, for I shall conclude that you never quitted your country; those who emigrated have brought forward so much evidence to prove that they did not, that I presume you are imposing on me in the contrary way, and that you have been really all the time in Paris. In two days you shall receive your erasure.”

It was accordingly announced by M. Maret (afterwards Duc de Bassano), who immediately conveyed the intelligence to my father at his abode, on the fourth story of a wretched furnished hotel in the Rue des Frondeurs. M. Maret was much affected in making a communication which he was aware would effect a great change in the circumstances of an in-

dividual who had suffered long and severely. My father never mentioned, without feelings of gratitude, Maret's kindness to him on that occasion.

All our property was sold, and, but for the generosity of an aunt, we should have been utterly destitute. At this time Madame Bonaparte acquired strong claims on our attachment. A new proof of the excellence of her heart soon occurred. It was on the following occasion :

A national fête was given to celebrate the anniversary of the Republic. There was a grand display of fireworks on the Seine, and the boatmen had orders to permit none but generals to enter their boats. Some of the fireworks, to which a wrong direction had been given, fell into a boat in which were M. de Valence, and his cousin, M. César Ducrest, a young man generally esteemed for his excellent character and amiable manners. By this unfortunate accident, M. Ducrest was killed, and M. de Valence had his arm broken.

M. de Valence, supposing that his young relative had merely fainted from the shock, had him immediately conveyed to the hut of the Commissary of Police, where every effort was made to restore him, but in vain. All that remained to be done was to contrive some mode of communicating the sad event to the family of the unfortunate young man, who were at that moment preparing for his approaching marriage.

Two messengers who were dispatched on this melancholy errand arrived at M. Ducrest's house about midnight. They merely stated that the young man had been wounded, and that he was under the care of a medical man, and wished to see his father. The old gentleman set out immediately, and as he approached the Champs - Elysées the two messengers began to hint at the serious nature of the accident; at length, when they reached the fatal spot where the remains of his beloved son were deposited, they entreated him to summon all his resolution. He had hitherto been far from suspecting the fatal truth, but he looked at his two guides, and the emotion depicted in their countenances left no doubt of his misfortune. The wretched father, in his despair, forgetting his two daughters and every remaining family tie, was on the point of rushing into the Seine, but the rash act was prevented by the two individuals who had so cautiously acquainted M. Ducrest with his irreparable misfortune.*

The Commissary of Police required the old man to go through the formality of owning the remains of his son, but all his natural strength of mind had for-

*Such was the melancholy end of this fine young man, who had escaped death on the field of honour, where, at a very early age, his gallant conduct induced Général Dumouriez to raise him to the rank of captain. "I have not yet attained the proper age," said M. Ducrest. "That is an additional reason for your receiving the honour," replied the general, and the rank was confirmed without a murmur of disapproval from his comrades.

saken him, and he could not look at the body. He, however, identified a watch and a pin which he had himself presented to his son only a few days before. He was conveyed home, and as he passed through the streets, the brilliant illuminations and the tumultuous rejoicing of the populace presented a painful contrast to the sorrow of the venerable old man.

On reaching home he was unable to utter a word ; but his silence and the despair depicted in his countenance sufficed to inform Madame Ducrest of the fate of her husband's son, to whom she was as fondly attached as though he had been her own.

On the morning after this fatal event Madame de Montesson, M. Ducrest's aunt, sent her carriage for the removal of the afflicted family. She was tenderly attached to her grandnephew, and his melancholy death proved a severe shock to her health, which had been long declining. M. Ducrest received the embraces and consolations of his aunt without shedding a tear. He had fallen into a state of apathy, which excited serious alarm. At this moment Madame Bonaparte was announced ; on seeing the condition of M. Ducrest, she took his eldest daughter by the hand, and catching in her arms the youngest, who was only fifteen months, she threw herself with these two children at the feet of the disconsolate father.

The wife of the First Consul, whose maternal heart suggested to her what was best calculated to

move the feelings of a parent, succeeded in drawing tears from the eyes of M. Ducrest; the apprehensions which had hitherto been entertained for his life were now at an end. Madame Bonaparte prevailed on her husband to suppress the fêtes which had been the cause of the fatal event.

I was a witness to the scene above described, and I shall never forget it. I have not attempted to report the words of Josephine; how would it be possible to describe the thrilling tones of her voice, and the expressive looks which accompanied them! Every attempt hitherto made to portray the fascinations of the Empress Josephine has proved unsuccessful. Her pictures all fall short of the original. Grace, which from its fugitive nature is so difficult to seize and represent, was the distinguishing characteristic of that amiable woman, who was no less beloved in private life than she was adored on the throne.

I may here relate a few particulars of Madame de Montesson, whose house was at this period the only one frequented by returned emigrants, — noblemen who had remained in France, *parvenus* enriched by spoil, celebrated men, and beautiful women. It was well known that Madame de Montesson had been married to the Duc d'Orléans, that Louis XVI. when at the Tuileries had received her as *his cousin*, and played a game at tric-trac with her. She is said to have boasted of this relationship at a time when it

might have been a sentence of death ; and after she escaped, as if by a miracle, from the fate that awaited her, her amiable and unassuming manners exacted from every one the respect which she was entitled to look for.

As soon as Bonaparte was raised to the Consulate, he sent to request that Madame de Montesson would present herself at the Tuileries. Whenever she appeared he rose to meet her, and assured her that he should feel pleasure in granting any boon she might think fit to solicit.

“General,” she replied, “I have no right to look for anything from you.”

“You have, then, forgotten, madame, that it was from you I received my first crown ! You came with the Duc d’Orléans to distribute the prizes at Brienne ; and when you placed on my brow the wreath of laurel, which was destined to be the precursor of so many others, you said : ‘May it bring you happiness !’ I am told that I am a Fatalist, madame ; therefore it is not surprising that I should remember what you have forgotten. I shall be delighted to be serviceable to you. Besides, the tone of good company is nearly extinct in France ; you must help to keep it up. Some traditions of former times will be useful, and you may communicate them to my wife. When foreigners of distinction visit Paris, they will be invited to your entertainments, where they will see

that grace and amiability are still preëminent in the French capital."

This was the origin of the favour enjoyed by Madame de Montesson; * and during the remainder of her long life she employed it for the benefit of others, and never for her own revenge.

The remainder of her fortune, added to her restored pension, made her annual income upwards of 200,000 livres, a considerable sum for that period, when money was yet scarce. She never visited, but she received company every evening. On these occasions she reclined on a sofa, having her feet on a stool, and concealed beneath a cover. She never rose, except to receive or take leave of Madame Bonaparte, or to lead out some one whom she did not wish to see again. Whenever she attended any one to the door, her meaning was always understood, and the persons to whom this ceremony was observed never presumed to return. Though brought up almost beneath her roof, I never saw more than two of her visitors dismissed in this way; they were persons who had become acquainted with her at the Waters of Plombières, and who ought never to have shewn themselves in her saloon. She usually gave a grand dinner once a week, and on other days she received her intimate friends, for whom covers were always

* The Consul restored her the pension of 160,000 francs which was granted to her by her husband.

laid at her table. Her most frequent visitors were MM. Berthollet;† de Talleyrand, de Pont, Maret, de Perignon, Villiers du Terrage, Arnault, Guines Millin, Desfaucherets, Garat, Aignan, Coupigny, Despréz, and Isabey. The amusement of the evening consisted of music or reading; but most frequently, conversation.

† Before the Revolution M. Berthollet's wife filled the situation called *femme de chambre harpiste* to Madame de Montesson, who was much attached to her.

CHAPTER V.

Portrait of Madame de Montesson.—Madame de Genlis and M. de Valence.—Louis Bonaparte's Marriage.—Ball in Honour of the King of Etruria.—Portrait of the Queen of Etruria.—Fête Given at Neuilly by M. de Talleyrand.—The First Consul's Gracious Reception of the Prince of Orange.

MADAME DE MONTESSON, by her marriage with a Prince of the House of Bourbon, has become an historical character. Her influence in the most brilliant society of Europe, and the esteem in which she was held by the Emperor Napoleon, induced me to endeavour to sketch a portrait of her somewhat more accurate than those which have yet appeared in the shape of biographical memoirs, etc. The particulars that have been published respecting this lady are remarkable only for their incorrectness. I will here note down such as have come within my own observation.

I cannot pretend to say whether Madame de Montesson ever possessed the remarkable beauty that has been attributed to her. When I first saw her she was sixty-three years of age. She was then very little, and exceedingly thin; but her complexion and

teeth were still beautiful. Her dark-blue eyes were full of animation, and her nose, though somewhat too long, was not displeasing. She was extremely particular about her dress; but she never wore anything unsuited to her age. She was fond of rich silks and lace. She never wore ornaments, and avoided glaring colours, generally wearing gray or white. The expression of her countenance was usually mild and benevolent; but nobody knew better how to assume a cold and imposing air. However, it was only under very serious circumstances that she put on what she used to call her *mine fermée*.

Her dignity of manner, purity of language, and sweetness of temper, gave a charming freedom and vivacity to her conversation, and she always carefully avoided angry discussions at a period verging on anarchy. Literary men and artists eagerly sought her approbation, which was almost invariably the guarantee of public favour, and her house was the resort of the patrons and friends of art. She was never displeased with those whose opinions differed from her own. She supported her arguments with good temper; and whenever she felt herself to be in the wrong, voluntarily acknowledged it. Good breeding was an indispensable requisite in those whom she admitted to her acquaintance. It was not sufficient that their manners were unobjectionable; she required that pink of politeness and gallantry

which is now so rarely met with; however, she fully attained the object she had in view, for at her house young people amused themselves with the utmost freedom, but at the same time with a due regard to reserve and propriety.

Madame de Montesson detested scandal, which was never suffered in her presence; she proclaimed silence whenever personalities formed the subject of conversation; she always entered into a warm defence of persons who were slandered when absent, even though her declared enemies. She had but one fault, that of treating some members of her family unjustly; but for this, perhaps, she must not be held entirely responsible.

She entertained an affectionate regard for M. de Valence, who had married her grandniece, Mdle. de Genlis.* M. de Valence ruled Madame de Montesson so completely that she had no will of her own; all her affairs were submitted to his consideration, and it was he, no doubt, who dictated her

*Not her niece, as is erroneously stated by M. de Toulotte in his work entitled "*La Cour et la Ville.*" M. de Toulotte, indeed, seems to have known but little about Madame de Montesson and her family, for he asserts that Louis XV. wrote to the Archbishop of Paris, requesting his permission for the marriage of the Duc d'Orléans and Madame de Montesson; but it is certain that the permission was verbally granted on condition that the marriage should be kept secret until the birth of a child. As to the *considerable legacies* bequeathed by her to her family, we shall presently see what they were. I never saw M. de Toulotte at Madame de Montesson's; therefore he could speak of her only from hearsay; and I can affirm that he has been misinformed on several points.

Valence.

Photo-etching from very rare print.



will, by which her relations, though poor, were disinherited. Twenty thousand francs, a sum inferior to that which she left to her *femmes-de-chambre*, could not be considered a suitable legacy to her niece and nephew.

M. de Valence, instead of seeking to make amends for arrangements so adverse to the interests of Madame de Genlis and M. Ducrest, refused to give the latter a picture painted by Madame de Montesson, and out of his 20,000 francs kept back a sum in payment of a very old debt. He ought, perhaps, to have acted more generously, considering that all his property was redeemed during the Revolution by Madame de Montesson, who, for this purpose, sacrificed her jewels.* Madame de Montesson must not, therefore, be accused of want of feeling, though she certainly exhibited great weakness during the latter years of her life. She feared M. de Valence as much as she loved him, and she submitted to all he required, for the sake of maintaining peace at home, where he reigned with absolute sway.

* M. Ducrest brought about this marriage with Mdlle. de Genlis, to whom Madame de Montesson gave a portion of 600,000 francs, to the prejudice of his direct heirs. On her daughter's account, therefore, Madame de Genlis had nothing to regret. M. Ducrest behaved very honourably throughout the whole business. He gave his niece the library and the diamonds of his first wife, Mdlle. de Canouville. I gather these particulars from a letter written by Madame de Valence, who always remained grateful to her uncle. Madame de Genlis, in her "Memoirs," says that Madame du Pont first projected the union; but that is a mistake.

Madame de Montesson gave the first ball that took place in honour of the marriage of Louis Bonaparte and Mdlle. de Beauharnais. Invitations were issued for seven hundred persons. There was, as yet, no Imperial Court, for Napoleon was only Consul ; though then young, I could not fail to remark the eager attention and servile flattery evinced by all classes to the Bonaparte family, whose fortunes already dawned so brilliantly that there was no calculating what ambition might aim at, when encouraged by such unexampled success. The foreign Ambassadors were present at Madame de Montesson's fête, which was on a most magnificent scale. Every countenance beamed with joy save that of the bride, whose profound melancholy formed a sad contrast to the happiness which she might have been expected to evince. She was covered with diamonds and flowers, and yet her countenance shewed nothing but regret. It was easy to foresee the mutual misery that would arise out of this ill-assorted union. Louis Bonaparte shewed but little attention to his bride ; and she, on her part, seemed to shun his very looks, lest he should read in hers the indifference she felt towards him.

This indifference daily augmented in spite of the affectionate advice of Josephine, who anxiously sought to produce some congeniality of feeling in the newly married couple. But all her endeavours were useless.

I subjoin two letters which she wrote to her beloved daughter some time before her separation from her husband was deemed indispensable. They shew how earnestly Josephine desired to see Hortense in the possession of that happiness and peace of mind to which she was herself a stranger. Her daughter's unhappy marriage, which she foresaw but could not prevent, was a source of deep distress to her. If she enjoyed any consolation under this affliction, it was that of witnessing the uninterrupted harmony which prevailed between the viceroy and vice-queen. But after all, can anything soothe the sorrow of a mother who sees her daughter's happiness blighted forever.

“TO QUEEN HORTENSE.

“I was deeply grieved at what I heard a few days ago, and what I saw yesterday confirmed and increased my distress. Why shew this repugnance to Louis? Instead of rendering it the more annoying by caprice and inequality of temper, why not endeavour to surmount it? You say he is not amiable! everything is relative. If he is not so to you, he may be so to others, and all women do not see him through the veil of dislike. To me who am disinterested, and who view him as he really is, he appears to be more disposed to love than fitted to be beloved, and that is certainly a valuable quality. He is generous, benevolent, and affectionate. He is a good father, and if you choose, he may be a good husband. His melancholy, and his taste for study and retirement, render him disagreeable to you. But let me ask you, is this his fault? Do you expect him to change his nature according to

circumstances? Who could have foreseen his altered fortune? You say he has not courage to maintain it, but that is a mistake. I should rather say he is not suited to it. With his secluded habits and his unconquerable love of retirement and study, he is out of place in the elevated station to which he has been raised. You wish that he resembled his brother, but he must first have his brother's temperament. You must have remarked that all our existence depends on health, and health upon digestion. If poor Louis's digestion were better, you would find him much more amiable. But as he is, there is nothing to justify the indifference and dislike you evince towards him. You, Hortense, who used to be so good, should continue so now, when it is most requisite. Take pity on a man who is to be pitied, for what would constitute the happiness of another. Before you condemn him, read once again the 'Letters of Madame de Maintenon;' she, too, groaned under the weight of her greatness, and bedewed with her tears a diadem for which she conceived her brow was never destined."

"TO THE SAME.

"You misunderstand me, my dear; there is nothing equivocal in my style, as there is nothing uncandid in my heart. How could you ever imagine that I share certain absurd, or, perhaps, interested opinions? Surely you cannot believe that I look upon you as my rival. We both reign over the same heart, but by titles very different, though equally sacred, and those who view my husband's affection for you in any other light than that of a friend and a father, know little of his heart. His soul takes too lofty a flight to be accessible to any vulgar passions. Glory engrosses him more, perhaps, than is conducive to our happiness, but the love of glory is incompatible with anything base. Such is my profession of

faith with regard to my husband. I frankly communicate it in the hope that it will calm your apprehensions. When I advise you to love, or at least not to repulse Louis, I speak to you as an experienced wife, a fond mother, and a friend; and in these three characters, which are all equally dear to me, I tenderly embrace you."

It was, I think, about this time that the King of Etruria arrived in Paris with his consort, his son, and some persons who were intended to form part of his modest Court. The presence of a Bourbon, who had been crowned by the hand of Bonaparte, was calculated to make a singular impression on every mind. The general opinion was that this was merely a prelude, and that a still greater proof of disinterestedness would soon be given by a man who secretly congratulated himself on thus having overthrown all royalist ideas and annihilated all republican hopes. The King of Etruria lodged at the "Hotel Montesson."* This hotel was built before the Revolution, and it communicated, by a hothouse, with the residence of the Duc d'Orléans, which Madame de

* Then occupied by the Spanish Embassy, but it was subsequently the scene of an awful catastrophe. On the marriage of the Empress Maria Louisa, Prince Schwarzenberg gave a fête at this house. The ball-room, which was erected in the garden, accidentally caught fire and several persons perished; among others were the Princesses of Schwarzenberg and La Leyen, both of whom rushed into the flames to rescue their daughters; the two young ladies escaped, but they had to deplore the fate of their amiable mothers. Mdle. de la Leyen afterwards married M. de Tascher, a relative of Josephine. A few months after the misfortune above mentioned, I saw her at Genoa in mourning, and dancing!" . . .

Montesson now occupied. The hothouse had been condemned, but the King of Etruria on his arrival requested permission to have the communications opened, so that he might have the opportunity of visiting Madame de Montesson at all times without mingling with the crowd by whom she was surrounded. Madame de Montesson consented, and the King took ample advantage of his proximity to her.

The Queen regularly, every day, took her son to see her *voisine*, as she used familiarly to call Madame de Montesson. The child bore a striking resemblance to his mother, and, therefore, was not handsome. This Princess was exceedingly unprepossessing in appearance; she was a little, dark, ugly woman, with a coarseness of manner which was exceedingly disagreeable. At seven in the morning she used to dress for the day, and nothing could be more amusing than to see her walking in the garden carrying her son in her arms, and wearing a llama dress, and diamonds on her head. She nursed her child, in the literal sense of the term, and this, as may be supposed, not a little deranged the elegance of her toilette, for the Prince Royal was yet an infant in arms and was subject to all accidents incidental to his age. Whatever might happen, the Queen never took the trouble of changing her dress, carelessly observing that the sun would make it all right again. She was certainly a good sort of woman, in the strict acceptance of the phrase.

She was unaffected, good-humoured, and scrupulously attentive to her duty.

The King, though less clever, was more agreeable than his wife, in spite of a certain air of constraint which might be accounted for by the equivocal situation in which he stood.* He never spoke of Bonaparte but in terms of enthusiasm ; and yet he seemed to regret being obliged to render justice to him, to whom he was indebted for his throne. Gratitude forced him to break the silence which old recollections imposed upon him.

Through the medium of the King of Etruria, Bonaparte tried the commencement of that power which he foresaw would soon be boundless. They both went to the Théâtre Français to see the tragedy of “*Œdipe*.” The audience eagerly seized the allusion conveyed in the following lines :

“*J' ai fait des Souverains et n' ai pas voulu l' être.*”

It was followed by unanimous and repeated peals of

* The account given of him by the Duc de Rovigo is greatly exaggerated. I used to see him frequently ; but I must confess that I never surprised him playing at *hide-and-seek* or *leap-frog*. Napoleon, who then paid attention to the government of conquered countries, would not have placed on the throne of Etruria a man entirely disqualified to rule. In appointing this sort of *prefect* he, of course, did not look for talent that might have resisted his will ; but he would not at that time have ventured to violate the ideas of propriety by seating an idiot on the throne. The King of Etruria was a man of the ordinary stamp ; and that is all that can in justice be said of him. In many eyes his greatest fault was being a Bourbon.

applause. This tragedy seemed destined to furnish applications complimentary to Napoleon.

L' amitie d' un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,"

was applied to him by the Emperor Alexander at Erfurt, and an audience of Kings and Princes approved it by loud testimonies of admiration.

Bonaparte sent the King of Etruria several magnificent presents : some carpets of the manufactures of Aubusson and la Savonnerie, and a Sèvres vase worth 300,000 francs. It was found necessary to fix up the vase in the King's grand saloon ; and for this purpose twelve workmen were employed. When they had completed the job, one of the chamberlains asked the King what he should give them.

" Nothing at all," replied His Majesty ; " it is a present sent me by the First Consul."

" Yes, Sire, but it is usual to give something to those who bring a present."

" That is *purchasing*, and not *accepting*. However, since it is the custom in France, I must conform with it ; and besides, a King ought to encourage the arts. Let them have a *crown* a piece."

Three louis was the sum-total that was offered, and the men declined taking it.

Madame de Montesson gave a ball to the King and Queen of Etruria.* She did the honours with her ac-

* I have just read, in the "Memoirs of the Duc de Rovigo," an account of his fête, which is so offensive to the memory of Madame de Montesson

customed grace, so that the illustrious travellers had an opportunity of seeing that our Revolution had not banished gaiety and elegance from French society.

that I cannot refrain from pointing out its inaccuracy. M. de Rovigo asserts that Madame de Montesson was guilty of an impropriety which had well nigh been attended with unpleasant consequences to herself, in inviting to this ball all the members of the Consul's family and the individuals connected with them. They all accepted the invitation without informing Bonaparte of the circumstance, and next day they were sharply reprimanded for going to the ball. "The Revolution," he adds, "must have been adopted in all its consequences, before a *mistress of the Duc d'Orléans* could have conceived the idea of assembling at her party all the returned emigrants and men who had raised themselves by their talent." M. de Rovigo is, doubtless, not aware that the King consented to the Duke's marriage, and that during his detention at the Tuileries he received Madame de Montesson as his *cousin*. She was obliged to sign all her deeds the *Widow Orléans*, lest they should be rendered null and void. Napoleon, convinced of the reality of Madame de Montesson's marriage, gave her a pension of 60,000 francs as dowry, and she was constantly at the Tuileries, where she was overwhelmed with marks of esteem. Finally, when Josephine became Empress, she frequently went, attended by her ladies, to visit Madame de Montesson, whom she never suffered to rise to offer her a seat. The Princesses of the Imperial Family all visited at Romainville, and during Madame de Montesson's last illness, one of the Emperor's pages was regularly sent to inquire after her. Had M. de Rovigo known these facts, he would, I am convinced, have erased from his manuscript a statement which was probably dictated by some private pique. Madame de Montesson did not like him, and I never recollect having seen him among her visitors. The reports then in circulation, whether true or false, prevented her from receiving him. It is difficult to suppose that a man, devoted as M. de Rovigo was to the will of Napoleon, should have ventured to attend a fête given in honour of a Bourbon without first consulting the man for whom, as he himself states, he would have sacrificed his own children. Even had he shewn such a want of circumspection on this occasion, it is still less probable that the Consul's family should have acted with such levity. All the details which I have given respecting the reception of Madame de Montesson at the Tuileries are strictly true, and can be vouched for by those who enjoyed her intimacy. A thousand witnesses could be immediately produced to defend this amiable woman against that unjust calumny from which she might have been spared by a man who knew her too little to judge her, and whose

M. de Talleyrand also gave an entertainment to Their Majesties at the Château de Neuilly, which then belonged to him. The park was illuminated by reflecting lamps, displaying a representation of the front of the Royal Palace at Parma, which was to be the residence of the King and Queen. A concert in which our first singers performed preceded the ball, which was opened by the King and Madame Leclerc, afterwards Princesse Borghèse. The supper was served in the most elegant style, in a spacious dining-room, the tables being laid out round orange-trees, whose branches in full flower formed arches over the heads of the guests. Ices in the form of fruits were suspended in beautiful baskets. In short, the imagination could conceive nothing more delightful.

The illustrious strangers must have carried with them a very favourable opinion of France, where they were received with marks of attention which they did not experience even in Italy.

The Prince of Orange, now King of the Netherlands, was among the distinguished visitors whom Madame de Montesson was directed to receive. His virtues, talents, dignified manners, and his misfortunes, ensured him an agreeable reception from a woman who was so well able to appreciate merit of every kind. He was pleased with her society, and frequently

opinion would carry with it considerable weight if misstatements were not corrected by truth. Mdle. Marquise was the *mistress* of the Duc d'Orléans; Madame de Montesson was his *wife*.

visited her. His countenance was handsome and full of expression, and his conversation animated. He never betrayed anything approaching to meanness or servility. Bonaparte loaded him with attentions, and in the most marked way evinced his esteem for him. Since his accession to the throne, this Prince has fully justified all the expectations that were formed of him.

CHAPTER VI.

M. Chaptal, Minister of the Interior. — Madame Lebrun. — Mdlle. Duchesnois Presented to Madame Bonaparte. — Her Début. — Rivalry between Mdlle. Georges and Mdlle. Duchesnois. — M. de Laval's Bon-mots. — Madame Récamier. — MM. de Forbin, Humboldt, Benjamin Constant, de Châteaubriand, Mathieu de Montmorency. — Portrait of Madame Récamier. — M. de Talleyrand and Madame Grandt. — M. Denon. — Count von Cobenzl and Madame Bonaparte. — Parsimony of an Ambassador. — Madame de Staël.

M. CHAPTAL, the Minister of the Interior, refused to grant an order for the *début* of Mdlle. Duchesnois, being persuaded that she was too ugly to succeed. Madame Lebrun, who was a warm patroness of the arts, in one of which she herself excelled, kindly requested Madame de Montesson to grant Mdlle. Duchesnois an evening at her house.

She also begged that she would invite Madame Bonaparte and M. Chaptal. Madàme de Montesson consented to do so, and assembled about two hundred persons on the occasion.

Mdlle. Duchesnois was at that time frightfully thin, and much more masculine in appearance than she

now is. Her dress, which was more than plain, was arranged as well as it could be by Madame Lebrun, who perfectly understood the art of female decoration. After a few hasty preparations, Mdlle. Duchesnois recited the part of "Phèdre" and a portion of "Roxane" in such admirable style that the Minister, like every one else, losing sight of the young lady's plain features, immediately gave an order for her *début*. Madame Bonaparte undertook the task of arranging her costume, and Madame de Montesson presented her with two beautiful dresses. It was determined that she should first perform at Versailles, in order to accustom her to the boards.

Almost all Madame de Montesson's friends attended this first appearance, and witnessed the commencement of that success which subsequently led to disputes and arrests. Nothing short of transcendent talent could have triumphed over the incomparable beauty of Mdlle. Georges. Mdlle. Duchesnois was supported by almost all the young students of medicine and law. She was known to be under the special patronage of Madame Bonaparte, a circumstance which had a powerful influence on a set of young men who were disposed to approve of anything that was agreeable to the wife of the First Consul.

To promote the prosperity of our home manufactures, Bonaparte directed that the ladies who appeared at the Tuileries should not wear any articles of for-

eign production. Madame Bonaparte had a great number of India dresses embroidered with gold and silver; these she gave to her *protégée*, who thus became possessed of a splendid wardrobe. She also gave her a magnificent set of topaz ornaments which she herself had received from M. de Souza, the Portuguese Minister.* In short, she supported the *débutante* through all the cabals that were raised against her, and enabled her to continue the representative of tragic queens, in spite of all the endeavours that were made to force her out of that line of characters. Had Mademoiselle Duchesnois realized the promises that at this time she held out, we should have been indebted to Josephine for a second Clarion worthy to compete with our Talma.

There are many people in the world who acquire reputation to which they have no right. Of this number was the Duc de Laval, who was generally looked upon as a fool. Many anecdotes were related in proof of his supposed stupidity. It used to be said of him that he declared he had received an *anonymous* letter signed by all the officers of his regiment, that he had placed sofas on the *four sides* of his octagonal drawing-room, and a thousand other absurdities of this kind.

* He married Madame de Flahault, the authoress of the charming novels of "Adèle de Sénanges," "Eugène de Rothelin," etc. To extraordinary talent, this lady united all that amiability of character which compels inferior minds to pardon that superiority which they cannot dispute.

Madame de Montesson, who was certainly very well able to judge of the understandings of those with whom she was acquainted, denied that M. de Laval deserved the character of a fool. She related several of his *bon-mots*, which certainly tended to discredit the opinion generally entertained of him.

He used to be her daily visitor, but on one occasion he happened to tell her that he should not be able to come next day. She was, therefore, rather surprised to see him enter as usual.

“I thought you told me you could not come to-day,” said she.

“*Mon Dieu!* I had, indeed, a thousand things to do, and I did not expect to see you. But I know not how it is, my horses bring me here as naturally as those of a devotee carry her to church.”

He was very rich, and people often applied to him for a loan of money, which he always refused, observing that he made it a rule never to lend, because the best thing that could happen was to have it returned. It would be difficult to quote an instance of more complete selfishness; but this was not the reasoning of a fool.

On arriving in England, at the time of his emigration, he visited several noblemen who had received him well before the Revolution. Almost all repeated the civility, but some few thought proper to dispense with it. Among the latter was the Duke of D——,

who did not even think it worth while to leave his card at the lodgings of a man who he supposed was a beggar.

Some time after, they both met together at Lord Cholmondeley's. M. de Laval was requested by His Lordship to take a hand at whist with the Duke of D——. The latter observed that M. de Laval would probably decline the invitation, when he knew what they were going to play for. "I beg Your Grace's pardon," said he, "I play from one guinea to a hundred a point; and for that reason I am surprised that you did not return my visit."

M. de Laval had brought from France a sum of money which enabled him to indulge his passion for play; besides he made his success at the card-table an object of speculation; he never played at hazard, and had in all other kind of games an acknowledged superiority. From vanity, many were proud of being allowed to match with him, and he confessed that at the end of the year he found himself in possession of a considerable sum, which put it in his power to maintain a suitable rank in London. Among the emigrants who were obliged to look about them for means of subsistence, he was the only one who chose to rely on this source, and it certainly required a clever head to carry his plan into execution. He is another proof of the false judgments often pronounced on men by the busy world.

The beauty of Madame Récamier, her magnificent entertainments in the days of her prosperity, and the simplicity of the costumes which she adopted, have often been the subject of eulogy; but at the same time it was common to talk of the weakness of her mind, for the purpose, doubtless, of attributing some imperfections to the most perfect of her sex; for her conduct, which was always irreproachable, could not be calumniated. This was again an instance of gross injustice. Madame Récamier is no less distinguished for her intellectual qualities than for her personal charms; but an invincible abhorrence to whatever looks like malignity makes her despise that sort of mental vanity which would sacrifice everything to a witticism. Her conversation is delightful, though she never makes any effort to shine. She speaks in a low voice to those who please her, and whom she attracts around her. That she is not entirely engrossed by attention to personal display is sufficiently proved by her intimate connection with the two most celebrated women of our age, Madame de Genlis and Madame de Staël. MM. de Forbin, Humboldt, Benjamin Constant, de Châteaubriand, Mathieu de Montmorency, etc., have sought her society with an eagerness which proves how capable she is of embellishing her circle. Men of letters often solicit her opinion on their works, which she always gives with that modesty which is natural to her.

Full justice has never been done to the courage she displayed on the ruin of her husband's fortune. She regretted the loss of immense wealth only because it deprived her of the power of doing good. It was then discovered that this woman so idolized, so involved in a course of compulsory dissipation, had founded a school for twelve orphan girls who were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework, and were fully prepared, by the age of fifteen, for going into any line of business. Their benefactress afforded them the means of turning what they had earned to advantage, and when they conducted themselves well they received a portion which enabled them to form a settlement for life.

Those who followed the elegant carriage of Madame Récamier under the persuasion that she was going to make purchases at Leroi's, or at the Petit-Dunkerque, were often surprised to see it stop at the door of some obscure house, where this amiable lady would alight to administer succour to aged poverty, or to give a packet of child-bed linen to some distressed woman on the point of becoming a mother, without having the means of clothing her unfortunate infant.

I have seldom the happiness of meeting Madame Récamier, but when I do see her I cannot look upon a countenance still so beautiful and so perfectly calm, without experiencing a profound feeling of sadness. It is impossible to suppose that vice could exist in

connection with such an expression of purity. The whole life of Madame Récamier gives support to the system of Lavater.

About the time at which the circumstances I have related occurred, much astonishment was expressed at the love of M. de Talleyrand for Madame Grandt, who, though extremely beautiful, had no idea of the superiority of the man she had charmed. M. de Talleyrand, on being asked how he could converse with one so uninformed, replied: "It is a relief to me." This phrase well describes the woman he afterwards married.*

He one day requested her to read Denon's "Travels in Egypt," that she might be able to say a few words on it to the author whom he had invited to dinner. Madame promised to follow her husband's advice, and he sent her the book. The hour of dinner arrived and M. Denon was seated beside the lady of the house.

* Bonaparte, when he became Emperor, wishing to restore that decorum which the Revolution had banished, resolved to put an end to the scandal to which the connection between M. de Talleyrand and Madame Grandt gave occasion. He hinted to the Minister the propriety of a marriage. Talleyrand at first refused, but the master having ordered, obedience soon followed. The Princesse de Talleyrand was presented at Court under that title, but she was received there only once; she never visited the Court again. The Princess Dolgorouki paid her a visit, covered with rich jewels which she inherited from Prince Potemkin. — "Oh, madame," said the Princesse de Talleyrand, "what beautiful diamonds! How happy they must make you!" "If you wish for the like, M. de Talleyrand will surely have great pleasure in giving you them." "How foolish," retorted Madame de Talleyrand, "do you think I have married a *Pope*!" I have this anecdote from the Princess Dolgorouki.

Wishing to follow the instructions she had received, she began by informing him that she had been delighted with the perusal of his beautiful descriptions. There were no bounds to the praise of his wonderful talent. "There is but one thing," said she, "with which I can find fault, and that is that the dear creature, *Friday*, comes in too late. He is so interesting that I wish I had known him sooner." The embarrassment and astonishment of M. Denon may be conjectured. He was unable to reply.

Mdlle. Charlotte * had on the same day left a copy of "Robinson Crusoe" with her protectress. The Princess read it by mistake for Denon's work, and hence the enthusiasm she felt for Friday.

I do not pretend to understand what are called grand conceptions in politics, which appear to me to be only a series of impostures. I shall, therefore,

* Now the Baroness Alexandre de Talleyrand, celebrated for her talent on the pianoforte. She was the pupil of Dussek, whom M. de Talleyrand got to reside in his house that the lessons might be given with perfect regularity. He was lodged and boarded, and received a salary of 6,000 francs. It is said, however, that the Prince did not behave with as much kindness as he should have done at the period of Dussek's decease. It has been taken for granted that Mdlle. Charlotte was a natural daughter of M. de Talleyrand, which is not the fact. My mother was acquainted with her parents, who were emigrants. The Prince, who was related to Madame de ———, learning that on her death-bed she was distressed about the fate of her little girl, promised to take charge of the infant; he kept his word. Her education was solid and brilliant, and her marriage with the cousin of her protector completed the discharge of the debt he had contracted. The Princess was extremely kind and attentive to her, and it is said her goodness has been ill repaid, for Madame Alexandre no longer visits her.

Mme. Talleyrand.

Photo-etching from very rare print.



refrain from speaking on a subject so far above me ; but I may be allowed to quote some of the sayings of this extraordinary man, who has always been able to extricate himself from the greatest difficulties, and who has floated safely amidst a torrent of events by which any other person would have been borne away and overwhelmed.

Every clever thing said in Paris used to be attributed to him, and this proves that he is capable of saying many. Some are so connected with history that it is impossible to forget them ; but others, which relate to individuals, are less known. It is difficult to conceive how he could acquire the astonishing facility of making the simplest circumstance, the most common subject, serve as an occasion for the display of what may be called his *prompt-payment* wit, the command of which, I believe, no other man ever possessed in an equal degree. Here are a few examples :

M. A—— de G——, noted for his dullness, his pretension, his unaccountable success with some women, and his large fortune, accosted M. de Talleyrand at a time when an anxious suspense prevailed on account of the vacillating system of the Government, and said :

“ Well, Prince, how go public affairs ? ”

“ Why, just as you see ! ” *

* To understand the force of this reply, it is necessary to know that M. Alex. de G—— squinted and looked quite awry.

The beauty of the Marquise de Luchesini, the wife of the Prussian Ambassador,* was extolled in M. de Talleyrand's presence.

"We have handsomer specimens in our Consular Guard," said he.

This remark appeared so just that henceforth the colossal Prussian beauty was no longer spoken of in terms of admiration.

The Parisians often diverted themselves at the expense of the Count von Cobenzl,† the second Ambassador of that name who came to France. His reputation for avarice was so great that Josephine, then Madame Bonaparte, resolved to play a trick upon him.

On a Court day she chose him for her partner at whist. He was unfortunate, and lost several rubbers in succession. On every occasion of ill luck his partner said to him: "I am really vexed, Count, to see you losing in this way; but you will be more fortunate next time;" and addressed a thousand other phrases to him which cut him to the heart, as he was fully persuaded that the wife of the First Consul

* A dark-complexioned, masculine, German lady, who, thanks to her title, her fortune, and certain petty airs which sometimes prove attractive, acquired the reputation of being handsome.

† He must not be confounded with his relation, Count Louis von Cobenzl, who was no less amiable as a man than skilful as a politician (the Duc de Rovigo says they were brothers, but that, I believe, is a mistake); he left at Paris friends whose very names are sufficient to honour his character: MM. Marat and Segur. The latter has mentioned him with just praise in his interesting "Memoirs."

must be playing for very high stakes. His vexation increased, and, notwithstanding his Court habits, he could not conceal it. Madame Bonaparte committed fault on fault, which tripled the torment of her unfortunate partner, whose distress augmented to such a degree that large drops of perspiration appeared on his forehead. At last cards were given up, and the trembling Ambassador asked, in a querulous voice, how much he had to pay.

"Nothing, Count," said Josephine, "and that will explain to you the philosophy with which I supported our run of bad luck."

On hearing these words the whole expression of the Count's countenance was instantly changed. He was overjoyed at the thought of escaping with nothing worse than a fright. This man had an annual income of 200,000 livres.

He was very much scandalized at the extravagant expenditure of the Minister for Foreign Affairs; and on seeing enormous fires lighted in all his apartments, he peevishly observed that he would allow no such doings in his house, for it must cost a great deal.

"Not quite so much as the mines of Peru, Count," replied M. de Talleyrand, with that satirical air which was peculiar to him.

This reply, which was so much at variance with M. de Talleyrand's accustomed politeness, elicited a

loud burst of laughter; and the poor Ambassador must have been convinced that his niggardly disposition was fully understood.

As Madame de Staël was one day playing with a party of friends at a game called *the boat*, she asked M. de Talleyrand whether he would save her or Madame de Grandt. This was an embarrassing question, for it happened to be put at the very time when Talleyrand's attachment for the former lady was on the decline, and he was beginning to conceive a passion for the latter, who was a very different person.

"You, madame, possess so much talent," he replied, "that you can extricate yourself from any danger; therefore, I would save Madame de Grandt."

Certainly it would have been difficult to say an ungracious thing more gracefully.

Talleyrand used to say that the Bailli de F—— was the bravest man in all France, for he ventures to swallow what his teeth masticate, and to walk upon spindle shanks which every moment seem ready to snap under him.

I never was personally acquainted with M. de Talleyrand, but I have heard, through the medium of his friends, traits that reflect honour on his heart, and which prove that his caustic turn of wit is not incompatible with amiable feeling.

CHAPTER VII.

The Empress Josephine's Household. — Madame de Montmorency. — Impertinence of Madame de Chevreuse. — The Emperor Exiles Her to Lyons. — MM. de Maillé and de Fitz-James. — M. de Comminges, Napoleon's College Companion. — MM. de C——. — The Emperor's Reply. — The Duc de Luynes. — Singular Will.

MADAME DE CHEVREUSE, who was appointed Dame du Palais to the Empress, fell into the error of behaving with a certain degree of unbecoming impertinence, at the suggestion, probably, of some silly advisers, who persuaded her that it was a fine thing to shew herself independent of *Madame Bonaparte*, as the Empress was still called in several of the salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

A young and pretty woman may, perhaps, be pardoned for supposing that she can lead a fashion or set an example; but Madame de Chevreuse, with her excellent understanding, should have felt that when she once accepted the situation she ought to have fulfilled its duties without servility or flattery, but with becoming dignity. Such was the line of conduct adopted by Madame de Montmorency, who was appointed at the same time with Madame de Chevreuse,

and who was, no more than the latter lady, an admirer of the new order of things. Her behaviour was always correct, without anything approaching to adulation; and I have frequently heard the Empress say that she preferred this honest reserve to the eager attention of the other ladies, who, as soon as they left the Tuileries, used to complain that their situation had been forced upon them.

The Emperor justly appreciated the manner in which Madame de Montmorency behaved at Court. He had received from the Grand Sultan a present of a magnificent diamond aigrette; this he divided, and gave one-half to Madame de Montmorency as a pledge of esteem; it was deserved. This was no mean compliment, at a time when servility and selfishness seemed to have absorbed every generous feeling.

The Emperor was struck with the contrast between the conduct of Madame de Montmorency and that of Madame de Chevreuse; to the latter lady he shewed his displeasure very unequivocally, and banished her a hundred leagues from Paris. She went to Lyons, where her mother-in-law followed her, and treated her with the most affectionate attention. It would have been better, perhaps, to have overlooked this sort of misconduct; to notice it, was to make it of too much importance.

The Empress, whose heart was a stranger to revenge, with her usual good-nature repeatedly solici-

ited the recall of Madame de Chevreuse, but without success. The Emperor, to all her applications, replied :

“ I will have no impertinence *here !* ” *

To this he ought to have limited his displeasure. Such an observation, in the palace of the Kings of France, was sufficient to make every one feel the elevation to which he had raised himself ; since almost all the old Dukes and peers were his servants.†

He loved to have the old nobility about him, and made strict inquiries after the members of illustrious families who did not offer their services. In this spirit he summoned to his presence MM. de C——, and asked them various questions, to which they replied very awkwardly. He offered them commissions in the army, supposing, for the name they inherited, that military service would be the mode by which they would prefer to attach themselves to his person. They refused, and accepted the office of chamberlains ! The Emperor then turned from them, and said, with evident displeasure :

† Madame de Chevreuse one day went to the Tuileries splendidly dressed, and in a blaze of diamonds. The Emperor, struck with her dazzling appearance, said : “ What a splendid display of jewels ! are they all real ? ” “ *Mon Dieu !* Sire,” replied the lady, “ I really don’t know ; but, at any rate, they are good enough to wear here.”

* We must except MM. de Maillé, de Fitz-James, and de Crussol, who would never accept any office under the Imperial Government, but lived in retirement on their half-ruined estates. In vain they were threatened with Vincennes ; they felt that the respectability of their conduct would secure them against imprisonment. They accordingly remained at home, and judged rightly ; they always supported their character.

“How I have been deceived; it is impossible that these gentlemen can be the descendants of the gallant C——!”

He also sent for M. de Comminges, who had been his fellow pupil in the military school.

“What have you been about during the Revolution? have you been in the army?”

“No, Sire.”

“Then you followed the Bourbons in their exile?”

“Oh, no, Sire, I stayed at home and cultivated my little estate.”

“That was very silly; in times of trouble every one owes a debt, which he is bound to pay personally, one way or the other. But what do you mean to do now?”

“Sire, a small place in the Exchequer of our little town will satisfy all my desires.”

“Very well, sir, you shall have it, and there you will remain. Is it possible that I can have been the companion of such a man!” said the Emperor, on dismissing him.

In fact, such conduct could not be comprehended by the Emperor, who, when at the military school, was an object of jealousy with the other pupils, because he was always held up to them as an example of perseverance.

“You Corsican dog,” they would say to him, “you are nothing but a sulker; you only want to gain the favour of the masters.”

“You will see what a Corsican can do,” was his reply.

These youths, however, rendered justice to his rising genius; for in their warlike sports he was their leader, and commanded his juvenile playfellows with as much authority and decision as he afterwards did men, when he controlled the destiny of empires. His plastic instruments murmured then, as they have done since, when he was out of sight; but when he reappeared, all was submission. His uncommon genius, and that air of superiority which distinguished him, even in the presence of the Sovereigns, his allies, imposed obedience on all around him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal.—MM. de Polignac and Their Aunt.—M. de Rivière and Madame de la Force.—Verses Addressed to that Lady.—Charles d'Ozier.—M. de St. Victor.—Maréchal de Pérignon.

MADAME DE MONTESSON purchased a small house at Romainville, whither she retired to avoid the daily fatigue of Paris society, and to cultivate flowers, of which she was passionately fond, and which served her as models for her charming pictures. She was one of the cleverest pupils of Vanspandoenk. Being, however, desirous, of gradually drawing around her some unfortunate friends, she was, for their accommodation, obliged to build.

Her intimate friend, M. Brongniart, the celebrated architect,* was employed to make the necessary additions, and the rural habitation was speedily con-

* We are indebted to him for the plan of the Exchange. That superb edifice was begun under his superintendence, but death prevented him from seeing it finished. M. Brongniart was a clever, lively man, and he possessed the art of mimicking the voices of different individuals. When the titles of *archi-chancelier* and *archi-trésorier* were created, he humorously observed that he would rather be an *architect*, for that was a thing not so easily made. M. Brongniart, the director of the royal Sèvres manufactory, is his son.

verted into one of the most charming residences in the neighbourhood of Paris.*

The house was furnished throughout in the most elegant style, especially the bedchamber of Madame de Montesson. At the side of her bed was a large panel of plate glass, through which was seen a spacious greenhouse, filled with the choicest flowers. In the middle was the winter room, which was commonly used as a breakfast-parlour, and the delicious fragrance of the plants and the warbling of a multitude of birds rendered the place truly enchanting.

In this delicious retreat, Madame de Montesson passed the last years of her life, her only Paris residence being some apartments in a hired hotel. The circle which she assembled round her was composed of the most select society of Paris, and Romainville was a fashionable place of resort. The intelligent and kind-hearted hostess was always happy when she saw others equally so around her. Her constant companions were her beautiful and accomplished nieces, Madame de Valence and Madame Ducrest, the latter a charming singer; Madame Robaday, a pupil of Steibelt, and celebrated for her proficiency on the pianoforte; Mdles. de Valence and Ducrest; Mes-

*It is now in the possession of the Marquis de Livry, who is said to have won it from the Count de Valence, to whom it devolved by inheritance. I cannot pretend to say whether or not it was really lost at the gaming-table, but it is strange that the grandnephew of Madame de Montesson, who was loaded with her bounties, should have parted with a residence which she created.

dames de Rigault and Delatour. Her dinner-parties were always attended by men distinguished for talent and information. The charming Madame Récamier, who, though in the zenith of her beauty, seemed anxious to conceal her own attractions, to enhance those of others; Madame Regnault Saint-Jean-d'Angely, whose beautiful countenance presented a perfect resemblance to that of Niobe; Madame de Talleyrand, with her noble figure and brilliant complexion; the graceful Madame de Barral, the lovely Madame de Bassano, the majestic Visconti,* and finally, the incomparable Princesse Pauline Borghèse, invariably graced Madame de Montesson's fêtes.

* Though turned fifty years of age, she still retained traces of exquisite beauty, and inspired the Prince de Wagram with so violent a passion that he wanted to divorce her from her husband and marry her. The Emperor opposed this, and to deprive him of all hope of ever accomplishing his wishes, he brought about a marriage between him and the Princess of Bavaria. Shortly after the celebration of this union, M. Visconti died. "How vexatious that this did not happen a little sooner!" exclaimed the disconsolate widow. Madame Visconti possessed a considerable share of natural talent, with but little information. Her Italian accent, and her frequent smart sallies, rendered her conversation exceedingly agreeable. A young lady of my acquaintance, who formed a love match which turned out very unhappily, being on a visit to Madame Visconti, the latter said to her: "I know what love is; it has made me act foolishly and imprudently, but it never betrayed me into anything so foolish as this." The influence she exercised over the Prince de Wagram was inferior only to that of the Emperor. He loaded her with valuable presents, by which means she became possessed of an immense stock of jewels. By her will she has bequeathed the whole of her property to the young Prince de Wagram. "Lightly come, lightly go," as she herself observed. Madame Visconti is generally beloved for her kind and amiable disposition. A paralytic affection has now almost entirely destroyed the beauty which Time so long respected.

That such assemblies should prove attractive beyond all others cannot be a matter of surprise. The Empress and Queen Caroline frequently breakfasted and spent a day with Madame de Montesson. Those visits were always hailed with joy by the neighbouring poor, among whom Josephine's presence never failed to diffuse happiness.

The pleasures of Romainville were interrupted in a tragical way. The conspiracy of Georges was discovered, and the newspapers mentioned the arrest of the accused parties, among whom were MM. de Polignac. Their aunt, Madame de la Tour, entreated Madame de Montesson to intercede in their behalf with her who was ever ready to aid the distressed. Regardless of the orders of her physician, who strictly enjoined repose, Madame de Montesson ordered her carriage, and drove to St. Cloud, where she obtained Josephine's promise to employ her interest in favour of MM. de Polignac and de Rivière.* When the fatal sentence was pronounced, Madame de Montesson again repaired to Madame Bonaparte,

* It has been said that their pardon was granted at the solicitation of Murat. Having been intimately acquainted with the individuals to whom I now allude, I can vouch for the correctness of the following statement: Murat certainly conjured his brother-in-law to observe clemency to all the accused, which he said would gain him popularity; but he specified no prisoner in particular. Madame de Montesson obtained the pardon, which she solicited with all the ardour of friendship. Madame Bonaparte found the Consul inclined to grant the pardon of MM. de Polignac, which had also been solicited by Général Savary, Duc de

and obtained a commutation of the punishment of the three unfortunate men who were destined, subsequently, to play so brilliant a part in public events. She extended her intercession to several other individuals, but succeeded only in favour of M. Charles d'Hozier, who probably never knew what voice was raised in his behalf.

It was found impossible to avert the fate of M. Coster de Saint-Victor, whose handsome person excited general interest, and whose death was truly heroic.*

The numerous executions which took place at this period rendered Paris as gloomy as it had previously been gay. The fate of these elevated servants of the Bourbons could not be easily forgotten at Romainville,

Rovigo. Among the ladies who were present at this celebrated trial was the Duchesse de la Force, and M. de Rivière, recognizing her in Court, sent her some verses which he had hastily scratched with a pencil on a slip of paper:

“A prison is a place of woe,
I'll prove it by example;
'Tis bad in the central bureau,
And far worse in the Temple.
In the Abbey one is never free
From sorrow or remorse.
No prisoner, then, can happy be,
But the prisoner of *La Force*.”

To improvise thus, under the weight of an accusation that might have ended with a sentence of death, is truly characteristic of a Frenchman.

* He exclaimed *Vive le Roi!* when his head was beneath the executioner's axe. He was nephew to Madame Coster, celebrated for the manner in which she painted flower pieces.

where they were never alluded to but with feelings of regret and profound respect.

The return of the illustrious exiles was certainly an event never looked for, but an interest was attached to everything connected with them. Madame de Montesson was unremitting in her attentions to the Duchess-dowager and Mdle. d'Orléans, to whom the Emperor had granted an annuity of 100,000 francs. If the payments happened to be delayed, urgent applications were made for them, and nothing was neglected which could be agreeable to the Princess. The glory of the French arms was dear to the *cousin* of the Bourbons. At Romainville every victory was celebrated by illuminations, and by distribution of alms to the poor. Many of our gallant commanders were the friends of Madame de Montesson, and she rejoiced in their triumphs, while at the same time she offered up prayers for the peace of those whom an odious Revolution had banished from their country. In short, there was more real French feeling at Romainville than anywhere else, for there misfortune was pitied and valour duly appreciated.

Général de Perignon enjoyed the intimate friendship of Madame de Montesson, a distinction for which he was partly indebted to the generous humanity he evinced at Parma to a Princess of the House of Bourbon.

The Princess, who had retired to a convent, was

reduced to such a state of destitution that she must have wanted the indispensable necessities of life but for the kindness of some of the nuns.

These facts having come to the knowledge of Général de Perignon, on his appointment to the governorship of Parma, he resolved to extricate the Princess from her embarrassments, in spite of any umbrage which the French Government might possibly take at such a proceeding. Generously waiving all consideration of self-interest, he visited the convent in which the Princess was languishing in poverty; he presented her with his purse, with which he requested she would repay the money she had been compelled to borrow; and having furnished her with everything that could alleviate her distress, he promised to write to France in her behalf.

This promise he did not forget, in spite of the weight of business that pressed upon him. He wrote to the Directory, representing that it was inconsistent with the dignity of the French Government to allow the Princess to be in want. In short, he pleaded her cause so successfully that he obtained for her a pension of 30,000 francs, which was regularly paid till her death.

The Princess cherished the warmest gratitude towards the general, whom she constantly addressed by the name of *father*. After he quitted Parma she wrote to him frequently, and always in the most affec-

tionate terms. I have heard the marshal extol her excellent disposition, and congratulate himself on the happiness he experienced in furnishing her with the means of exercising the first of all virtues, benevolence.

The honourable conduct of Maréchal de Perignon secured to him the respect of his fellow citizens, and the love of all who enjoyed his acquaintance. Before the Revolution he served in the rank of lieutenant and aide-de-camp to Comte de Preissac, lieutenant-general of the King's forces, and it was only in the presence of the enemy that he lost sight of that moderation which formed the basis of his character. During the Reign of Terror he retired to his estate in Montech, where he lived beloved by his neighbours and blessed by the poor, and where he was unanimously chosen one of the magistrates of the district, and subsequently a member of the legislative assembly. Having become a member of the military committee, he exerted his endeavours to prevent the disorganization of the army, but without success. The fatal 10th of August arrived, and the deputies, who remained faithful to their King, narrowly escaping proscription, returned amidst a thousand dangers to their respective departments.

Being now restored to the rank of a private citizen, the name of Maréchal de Perignon might possibly have swelled the list of the victims of that disastrous

period, but that his courage and his ruling passion, the love of glory, once more led him into the career of arms.

He refused the command of the army of the west; but he reaped glorious laurels in Spain as lieutenant-colonel of the Legion of the Pyrenees, then the terror of the Spaniards.*

Courage and presence of mind were innate qualities in Maréchal de Perignon. He was not distinguished by brilliant parts; but he possessed that solid sense and correct judgment which are so requisite in the man who is destined to guide others in those critical moments when all depends on vigorous and prompt decision. He mainly contributed to the capture of Montesquiou, one of the most brilliant achievements in the history of French glory. In a decisive moment he seized the musket of a grenadier and marched forward, leading his men to the charge with the bayonet.

He was afterwards sent as Ambassador to Spain; and, despising all those diplomatic artifices which are founded on distrust and intrigue, he adopted a line of policy dictated solely by good faith.

He afforded support and protection to several emigrants;† and when it was hinted to him that this

* From the ranks of this legion arose three French marshals: Bessières, Lannes, and De Perignon; besides many distinguished generals and superior officers.

† Among others, the Duc d'Aumont, who constantly entertained the sincerest friendship for him.

might be displeasing to the French Government, he replied :

“ I know not what is meant by *émigrants* ; I know them only as *Frenchmen* ; and under that title, they may depend on it, I will never betray their confidence.”

He was one of the last to recognize the forfeiture of Napoleon. He had taken oaths from which he did not think misfortune released him ; and it was not until the Emperor's abdication was no longer a matter of doubt that he again entered the service of the Bourbons. During the hundred days, he refused to come from the south of France to join Napoleon, who, in consequence, erased his name from the list of marshals.

Louis XVIII. on his second return appointed Maréchal de Perignon governor of Paris, observing that he consigned the trust to *fidelity itself*.

The Duc de Berri, who duly appreciated his noble conduct, received him with the most marked attention. From among the many handsome compliments he paid him, I may quote the following :

“ The bâton confers no honour on you, marshal,” said His Royal Highness ; “ it is you who honour it.”

He died leaving behind him very little fortune, but his unsullied reputation is the noblest inheritance he could bequeath to his children.

These particulars are chiefly gathered from the address delivered to the Chamber of Peers by his colleague, Général Ricard.

Madame de Montesson, whose health had been declining since her arrest, became so seriously ill in 1805 that it was found necessary to remove her to Paris; there she was attended by MM. Corvisard and Hallé, who, together with M. Couad, her own physician, declared that there were no hopes of her life.

She had passed eighteen months in prison, and, during that time, had suffered privations of every kind. By a refinement of cruelty the place of confinement selected for her was exactly facing her own hôtel, so that from the windows of her prison she could see her garden, through which were constantly passing those kind friends who, at the risk of forfeiting their own liberty, ventured to call and make inquiries for her. In those fearful times a look or a gesture might lead to the scaffold. Madame de Montesson received the most affecting proofs of attachment from several of her faithful servants. Her principal *femme de chambre* left four children ill with the smallpox, rather than forsake the mistress by whom she had been brought up, and who, when restored to fortune, treated her like a friend. Madame Naudet dined her regularly when only her usual circle was present. Such disinterested friendship well deserved the affection which was sincerely re-

turned to that excellent woman, who is the mother of a family distinguished for virtue and talent.

Madame de Montesson died on the 5th of February, 1806. Throughout her illness her patience never forsook her, and her lips never gave utterance to a complaint.* Her last moments were soothed by the affectionate and unremitting attention of her nieces, Mesdames de Valence and Ducrest; the former sat up almost every night by her bedside.

M. and Madame de Valence inherited the whole property of 20,000 francs bequeathed to M. Ducrest and Madame de Genlis. Her testamentary arrangements had long been foreseen, and, consequently, Madame de Genlis's attentions to her aunt were the more praiseworthy because they were wholly disinterested.

Madame de Montesson and Madame de Genlis never liked each other, though the latter lady was not wanting in the respect due to her distinguished relative. She wrote for her a charming tale, entitled "*Les Réunions de Famille*," and during her illness paid

* The Emperor directed that Madame de Montesson should be interred with the honours usually rendered to a Princess. She lay in state for eight days in an illuminated chapel at Saint-Roch, a thing which was at that time very unusual. As her coffin was being carried to the hearse which was to convey her remains to Saint-Assise, where she had expressed a wish to be interred beside her husband, it was met on the steps by the funeral procession of Mdle. Marquise, the mistress of the Duc d'Orléans, and the mother of the Abbés de Saint-Farre, Saint-Albin, and Madame de Brossard. Thus death brought together two persons who seemed destined never to meet.

her the most assiduous attention, visiting her as frequently as her occupations would permit. The justly acquired celebrity of Madame de Genlis, perhaps, excited some little jealousy on the part of Madame de Montesson; but be this as it may, she never cherished for her accomplished niece those sentiments of regard which her merits are calculated to inspire. It is to be regretted that any petty feeling of rivalry should have created disunion between two persons who seemed formed to love and appreciate each other. Pride, wounded by marked superiority, rendered Madame de Genlis something worse than an object of indifference to her aunt. But the wrongs, which were all on one side, are now buried in the grave. The manner in which Madame de Genlis always discharged her duty to her aunt is a proof of her amiable and forgiving nature.

The loss of Madame de Montesson was severely felt in the brilliant circle which used to assemble at her house. No other lady was then in the habit of receiving so much company, except the Duchesse de Luynes, at whose parties cards generally superseded conversation.* The salon of the Duchesse de Luynes would have been insupportably dull but for the presence of Madame de Chevreuse, who occasionally

* The closing of the gaming-houses drove many wealthy bankers to the parties of the Duchesse de Luynes, where people might be ruined in fashionable company as speedily and completely as in any of the *hells* of the Palais Royal.

succeeded in engaging some of the company in amusements of a more agreeable and less dangerous kind than the *rouge et noir* table.*

M. de Luynes was so enormously fat that it was painful for him to move. A child might really have taken him for one of the ogres who so frequently figure in nursery tales. A curve was made in one of the card-tables to enable him to sit at it conveniently; he was an absolute monster. A young lady of my acquaintance, on being introduced to him at a ball, was so terrified at his enormous size that she fled into the anteroom.

When his will was opened after his death, it was discovered that by some unaccountable mistake he had post-dated it, and its provisions could not be carried into effect until a year after. This blunder annulled the testamentary arrangements. Madame Mathieu de Montmorency, out of respect to the memory of her father, wished the will to remain unaltered, in which she was seconded by her husband. M. de Chevreuse wished to annul the will, though its provisions were greatly to his advantage, but he at length yielded to the representations of his amiable sister. This instance of filial piety is worthy of record in an age when the love of money so frequently prompts what is base and dishonourable. It

* The Comtesse de la Ferté, the mother-in-law of the Duc de Rivière, and the Marquise de Gaville also permitted gaming at their parties.

is gratifying to bestow one's tribute of admiration to the memory of him who was so suddenly snatched from the family of whom he was the pride and consolation, and from the numerous circle of friends whom he was ever ready to serve.

CHAPTER IX.

Madame de Montesson's Quarrel with M. Ducrest. — The Duc de Chartres. — His Embarrassments. — M. Seguin, His Treasurer. — The Palais Royal Laid Out for Shops. — Resignation of M. Ducrest.

THE cause of Madame de Montesson's aversion for her nephew, the Marquis Ducrest, was so honourable to the latter that it would be wrong to pass it over unnoticed. I shall here relate it; but in doing so it is necessary to go back to an earlier period.

When the Duc de Chartres espoused Mdle. de Penthièvre, an income of 800,000 livres was secured to him by the marriage contract, with the Palais Royal for his residence. This revenue could not be increased during the life of the Duke's father and father-in-law, because it consisted of a life annuity of 400,000 francs, and of rent arising from lands let on long leases. Free, however, from all incumbrance, such an income might very fairly, at that time, be considered sufficient, with prudent management, to maintain a Prince of the blood in the splendour suitable to his rank. But this expectation was not realized.

The Duc de Chartres was not long married when he outran his income, and was obliged to resort to the ruinous resource of borrowing. The two great fortunes of which he was the heir readily procured him a very extensive credit, on which he drew without discretion. He adopted the ruinous practice of granting life annuities and spending, as fast as he received it, the money he borrowed on them. The payment of the annuities, added to his annual expenses, placed him every year under the necessity of progressively increasing the amount of his loans. Had he paid due attention to the subject, he would have foreseen the fatal consequences which such transactions cannot fail to produce, and he would, at least, have limited their extent.

The mischief became evident at the end of a few years. In 1780, M. Seguin, the Duke's treasurer, informed him that the annuities which had been created since his marriage amounted to 800,000 francs, a sum exactly equal to the whole of his revenue; that no more money could be borrowed, his credit being completely gone, in consequence of the way in which it had been abused; that, nevertheless, in the hope of finding persons who might be induced to lend, he had himself made advances from his own funds; that he had continued these advances as long as he was able, but that the amount being now 800,000 francs, it was impossible for him to do

more; and that he was at last under the necessity of making known his painful situation, of informing His Highness that he must discontinue his services, and of claiming payment of the sum due him.

It may easily be conjectured how mortified the Duc de Chartres must have been on hearing that declaration. Heedless, fond of splendour, and generous to prodigality, he had never calculated, and now that he knew the truth there was no time for calculation. He hastened to consult the most able men of business in Paris; but no one could suggest the slightest relief. He then stood in the most dreadful situation in which a Prince can be placed, that of declaring himself — respect withholds me; but it is impossible to mistake the word which was on the point of escaping from my pen.

Madame de Genlis, who was at this time the governess of the Princess and her brothers, advised him to consult M. Ducrest. Accustomed to do justice to the unbounded attachment to his family displayed by this lady, who, young, rich, and handsome, had retired from the world to educate his children, the Duke immediately followed her advice. It was, moreover, very natural for him to rely on the disinterestedness of the brother of a woman, who, without remuneration, scrupulously discharged that duty which is, of all others, the most laborious when executed as it was by her.

M. Ducrest justified the honourable confidence placed in him by pointing out a resource of a truly extraordinary nature, and which, perhaps, he alone could have discovered. He went to Madame de Montesson at Rincy, where she was residing with her husband, the Duc d'Orléans, and informed her of the unfortunate situation of the Duc de Chartres, observing, that to assist in extricating him from his difficulties would greatly redound to her credit; and that, to act so generous a part, would do her the more honour as it was well known she was aware how little good-will her son-in-law bore her. In fine, he prevailed on her to urge the Duc d'Orléans to make a grant of the Palais Royal to his son.

With much difficulty the Duke's consent was obtained. M. Ducrest had taken the precaution to bring with him M. Rouen, the Prince's notary, who had a conveyance ready drawn, so that as soon as the consent was obtained there was nothing to do but to sign it.

With this important deed in his possession the Marquis Ducrest returned to Paris, where he soon found capitalists ready to advance the funds necessary for making the projected improvement of the Palais Royal. He shut himself up for several weeks with M. Louis, the architect, to complete the plan and calculate the expense; their estimate came within 100,000 crowns of the actual outlay.* While the

* The expense amounted to 3,500,000 francs.

buildings were in progress, tenants came forward with offers to the extent of 1,200,000 francs. M. Ducrest wished to finish the fourth side, but the Prince, who was satisfied with getting out of his embarrassments, refused his consent, observing that he would consider of it afterwards. However, M. Ducrest, who wished to shew what his general project was, began what he was so desirous of proceeding with, and which is now in the course of completion on the same plan.

The Prince wished to reward M. Ducrest for succeeding so promptly in procuring him five millions of which he stood in need to meet the building expenses, and to make a reserve for himself of 1,500,000 francs that he might be enabled to wait until the speculation became productive ; for having been the means of inducing the Duc d'Orléans to make a full and unqualified grant of the Palais Royal ; for having obtained letters patent, authorizing the alienation of a property which, according to the law then existing, was inalienable ; and finally, for having procured the registration of the letters patent by the Parliament, notwithstanding the opposition of the proprietors of the buildings on the old site, etc. M. Ducrest refused all the brilliant offers of the grateful Prince. During five years he performed the duties of a zealous and devoted agent without any personal advantage to himself except the satisfaction he derived from prov-

ing his attachment from the Bourbon family, and pleasing a sister whom he loved.

The advantageous speculation of the Palais Royal excited numerous enemies against him; and he was long persecuted by those dark intrigues of which a man of unsuspecting integrity is often the victim, and by atrocious calumnies which he uniformly despised, but to which must be attributed part of the misfortunes he experienced during the long period of his emigration, and even after his return to France.

On the 24th of November, 1785, the Duc de Chartres, who had then succeeded his father, the Duc d'Orléans, appointed M. Ducrest his chancellor; he thus discharged a secret debt.

To serve the Sovereign is a duty, but still it is allowable for the subject to solicit a recompense; but though attended by the certainty that no reward will be given, the service is not the less obligatory. It is not the same with respect to the relations which may subsist between an individual and a Prince of the blood. The one owes to the other only that respectful homage of which the law of the State and the custom of society prescribe the forms; every other kind of attention is perfectly voluntary. It would, therefore, have been injustice in the Prince to have made no recompense, or even to have failed to proportion the reward to the service performed. The late Duc d'Orléans proved that he felt the force of

this truth by the manner in which he acted towards M. Ducrest when, in 1787, he accepted his resignation of the chancellorship. Having to account only to the Prince, whose full confidence he possessed, receiving a salary of 100,000 francs, and occupying a superb hôtel, his place was, unquestionably, one of the most desirable that could be obtained; but M. Ducrest no longer wished to retain it when he saw the Prince surrounded by perfidious counsellors who could not fail to lead him to his ruin, since they were capable of taking advantage of a discontent which was, perhaps, excused by the great injustice which had provoked it. The superior talents of MM. de Laclos and Siéyès were much to be dreaded when it was seen that they had gained an ascendancy over the Prince, whose want of firmness was, doubtless, his greatest fault. When he would not renounce so dangerous a connection, it became the duty of a faithful officer to quit a place which rendered him in some measure responsible for faults committed by his master. The Duke, however, did more than even could have been expected from his munificence; he recompensed his chancellor like a sovereign! *

When M. Ducrest was appointed chancellor, Madame de Montesson requested that he would enter the pen-

* He granted him a pension of 20,000 francs, with the reversion of one-half for his son. Since the Restoration, the present Duke has reduced it to 6,000, with the reversion of 2,000 to Madame Ducrest and her daughter; the arrears were reduced to 70,000 francs instead of 325,000.

sion, which she received from the House of Orléans, under the title of *dowry*. Her nephew observed that he could not adopt that mode of acknowledging a marriage which the King had permitted but not recognized.* He informed her that she should still continue to receive the same sum, but under the denomination of a pension.

“Do you not consider it an honour, nephew, to be the relative of the late monseigneur?”

“Dear aunt,” replied M. Ducrest, “it is precisely to render myself worthy of that honour that I endeavour honestly to fulfil the duties of the office which his son has entrusted to me. I sincerely regret that I cannot oblige you; my scruples are dictated by honour; and to seek to overcome them would be to close your door against me; for I would not incur the risk of entering upon so painful a discussion.”

This was the origin of Madame de Montesson’s coolness towards the family whom she disinherited. She always suspected that Madame de Genlis coincided with her brother in this refusal; which, however, was not the fact. It was a conscientious scruple on the part of M. Ducrest who, at his death, was regretted by all parties. In France difference of opinion is forgotten in rendering justice to great services and honourable conduct.

* He did not recognize it, as I have already observed, until a subsequent period.

CHAPTER X.

Journey to Switzerland.—Arrival at Geneva.— Kind Reception by M. de Barante.— Manners and Customs of the Genevese. — Sunday Parties. — Madame de Staël in Exile. — Comte de Saint-Priest and His Three Daughters. — M. le Hoc, the Friend of the Duc de Bassano, Formerly Ambassador at Geneva.

MY father's health being greatly deranged from the effect of the long and repeated vexations he had undergone, his physicians were of opinion that travelling would be of service to him, and recommended him to go to Switzerland. He made choice of the city of Geneva, on account of its fine climate ; and, as it had become a part of France, he could go thither without quitting his country. The rigours of exile had made him more than ever sensible of the happiness of remaining in his native land.

We experienced the kindest reception from the Prefect, M. de Barante, a well-informed man of unassuming and amiable manners, who was universally esteemed in a town in which a Frenchman was usually an object of dislike. The Genevese could not console themselves for having been forced to relin-

quish the independence of which they were so proud, and for the loss of the numbers of young men who every year became conscripts, guards of honour, or sub-lieutenants. Though subjects of the Empire, they still retained their republican ideas and habits; they were conquered, but not subjugated; and but for the profound veneration in which the Prefect was held, it would, I think, have been difficult to restrain public dissatisfaction. Without ever resorting to violent measures, he strictly enforced the laws enacted by the Emperor, frequently modifying their severity by his conciliatory disposition. He never feared to compromise himself by receiving in his house individuals who he knew did not enjoy his Sovereign's favour.*

Thanks to the kindness of M. de Barante and the friendship of the Boissier family, we obtained the most agreeable introductions on our arrival in Geneva. We were much pleased with the Genevese. Their customs, which differ very much from those of the French, have contributed to preserve that purity of

* Thus he was on terms of intimate friendship with Madame de Staël and M. de Saint-Priest, formerly Ambassador to Constantinople, who followed Louis XVIII. to Mittau. His gratitude to the Emperor Alexander induced him to remain in Russia with his three sons. Though old and infirm, he felt a great desire to see his daughters, who had been educated in France, and he solicited permission to go to Montpellier; but, after surmounting many obstacles, he could only obtain leave to go to Geneva with his sons. His daughters, who alternately spent some months with him, were all remarkable for beauty and exemplary conduct. The unfortunate brothers Faucher also found a protector in M. de Barante, who has always befriended the distressed. His amiable family have inherited his virtues and talents.

manners which not even the Revolution had power to corrupt, and the reality of which every candid mind will readily admit.

For the space of three years I had the opportunity of closely observing the different ranks of society. Availing myself of the privilege of a foreigner, instead of confining myself to one particular class I mingled with all whom I found agreeable, without troubling myself about the distinctions laid down by the inhabitants of the town. In spite of their liberalism, the Genevese have an unusual share of pride. The ancient patrician families, who are nobles, are no less jealous of their ranks than our French Dukes and peers. One cannot live in the *lower part* of the town (which by the bye is far the most agreeable quarter) without incurring the contempt of those who reside in the *upper part*. The streets in the neighbourhood of the lake are occupied by shopkeepers, while public functionaries, bankers, and persons of fortune throng to streets to which there is no access except by a steep ascent.

On our arrival my mother hired a very pleasant lodging in an airy situation (the Place du Molard), and our windows commanded a delightful prospect. Pleased with the arrangements she had made, my mother described to a lady of her acquaintance the advantage of her lodgings, and mentioned the reasonable rent at which she had procured them; but she

was astonished to find that her friend listened to her with marked coolness :

“ Was I not right to close the bargain immediately ? ” inquired my mother.

“ No, I think not, ” replied the lady.

“ Why ? I am sure we shall be exceedingly comfortable. ”

“ Very likely. ”

“ The air is delicious, purified by the Rhone, which flows almost beneath our windows. ”

“ Very true. ”

“ The view of the lake is enchanting. ”

“ So it is ; but yet you cannot possibly live there. ”

“ I cannot guess your objection. ”

“ Why, the fact is, nobody would visit you ; it is the *lower part* of the town, which is occupied by the shopkeepers. You must live in a more genteel situation. ”

Everybody to whom we mentioned the subject was of the same opinion ; and we were accordingly obliged to give up our pleasant lodgings and look out for others.

After some trouble we at length succeeded in procuring apartments in a little dirty, narrow street. Only a slight wall separated the house from the common jail. But our friend rejoiced to see us installed in this disagreeable abode, for she began to fear that we should not obtain lodgings in the *fine quarter* of the town.

The rooms communicated with each other by little steps, which, owing to the scanty supply of light that was admitted to them, were so very dangerous that we every moment ran the risk of breaking our necks. The paper on the walls was of a large flowered pattern in very bad taste, and, moreover, none of the cleanest. However, we had no choice, as there were no other *good* lodgings to be had.

My mother was much annoyed at being compelled to make this sacrifice to gentility. By way of consolation her friends informed her that she was in possession of the room which once belonged to Calvin.*

“What an odious drawing-room!” said my mother.

“Never mind that. Your bedchamber was once occupied by a celebrated man.”

“But it is so exceedingly dark.”

“He had light enough to write all his books in it.”

“But this proximity to the jail is insupportable. The noise of the unfortunate prisoners, the barking of dogs, and the oaths of the jailers disturb my rest.”

“Pooh, nonsense! Calvin slept soundly enough here.”

It was useless to complain, and, in spite of every inconvenience, we were forced to be satisfied with our *genteel lodgings*.

The distinction of classes is carried to such a

* This was the fact; and from the dilapidated condition of the room there appeared reason to conclude that it had not been repaired since Calvin's time.

length that young ladies who are always accustomed to walk out alone take a waiting-woman with them when they go into the lower part of the town to make purchases. Yet the inhabitants of that despised quarter are remarkable for good conduct and respectability.

We issued invitations for a little party on Sunday evening, and to our surprise we received apologies from all the Genevese ladies, who returned for answer that they were previously engaged. My mother mentioned this to Madame de Staël, who informed her that nobody thought of inviting any but foreign ladies on a Sunday, a day on which the Genevese ladies had parties among themselves, which nothing but illness exempted them from attending.

These parties are formed in the following manner: it is agreed that a dozen little girls of about four or five years of age shall meet and spend the evening together every Sunday. They admit no strangers, not even their sisters, who have separate parties attended by girls of their own age. When one of the society marries, she is chosen as chaperon to all the rest; young men are then invited, and this is called *opening the society*.

All noisy amusements are banished from these parties; card-tables are laid out in the drawing-rooms, and the company sit down to whist. At half-past ten, tea and meringues are handed about (the

latter are indispensable to the epicures of Geneva), and at eleven the party breaks up.

Sometimes, but very rarely, balls are given. No instance of indecorum is ever known to occur at these meetings, where a number of young females are under the guardianship of one of their own age. The man who should suffer an indecorous expression to escape him in such a company would be immediately banished from Genevese society.

These Sunday parties take place every week regularly, except when interrupted by the death of one of the friends; the rest then wear mourning for three months, and their meetings are suspended.

There is something exceedingly interesting in friendships formed thus in early life, and they must be a lasting source of happiness to those by whom they are contracted; they grow old together, and in advanced life they enjoy the pleasure of finding themselves surrounded at least once a week by persons whose tastes and recollections coincide with their own. They may talk over the pleasures of their youth without exposing themselves to the ridicule of the young and thoughtless. The women hear praises of their former beauty, in spite of the wrinkles which the hand of Time has imprinted on them, and the men are complimented on that elegance and gallantry which have become only things of recollection. In short, the friends thus assembled together are happy

in the indulgence of that self-love which is so often chilled when we compare what we are with what we have been. The good old grandmother, while gratified by the compliments bestowed on her favourite granddaughter, looks back with self-complacency on the admiration which she herself excited, and the recollections of her own youth render her indulgent to the youth of others.*

* M. Raoul Rochette, in his "Letters on Switzerland," treats Geneva and its inhabitants very severely. He dwells on their faults and says little of their merits, which, in my opinion, predominate infinitely. The same author has, however, published an account of a second visit to Geneva, in which I understand he retracts his former unjust opinions with that candour with which a sensible man always acknowledges an error. The respectful attention with which he was treated by all classes of people must, at least, have convinced him that talent is duly appreciated in Geneva. His introduction to several Genevese, distinguished for information and intelligence, and his acquaintance with Mdles. Necker and Boissier, helped him to form opinions more conformable with truth; and he now speaks of the talents of Mdles. Naville, Pictet, and Boissier as all do who have the happiness to know them. The authoress of the "*Mémoires d'une Contemporaine*" has also pronounced a very unfavourable opinion on the ladies of Geneva. Fortunately, she confesses that she passed only *eight days* among them. Their education is superior to that which generally falls to the lot of their sex, and they are fond of cultivating the sciences and fine arts. That which to us may have the appearance of pedantry is with them merely the natural consequences of an education which elevates them above all frivolity. If the "*Contemporaine*" could have formed an intimacy with families as easily and speedily as she travelled through Europe, she would, I am convinced, have shared my admiration for the exemplary mothers, wives, and daughters of Geneva. She would have confessed that in no country can be found women more distinguished for talent and virtue. I spent three happy years in Geneva, where I experienced nothing but kindness. There, too, I contracted an ardent friendship for a lady who is now no more. These circumstances make me always anxious to render justice to Geneva and its inhabitants; for this it is only necessary to describe what I saw. Gratitude must be my apology for dwelling so long on this subject.

M. le Hoc arrived shortly before we did. He was delighted with Geneva and its inhabitants, upon which he wrote some elegant verses, which I shall transcribe. They are the unpublished effusions of an author who obtained great success at the Théâtre Français. His tragedy of "Pyrrhus," which afforded a fine opportunity for the display of Talma's acting, was received with distinguished approbation. The subject presented allusions displeasing to the Emperor, and the performance was prohibited. A usurper, on being advised to surrender a throne which his victories enabled him to ascend, could not be permitted to say, —

"Je pourrais en tomber, je n'en veaux pas descendre."

Talma made several attempts to revive this piece, but without success. M. le Hoc was appointed Ambassador to Sweden after his return from Greece, whither he accompanied the Comte de Choiseuil in quality of secretary.* I know not for what reason he was recalled, and left unprovided for. His intimate friend, the Duc de Bassano, vainly endeavoured to get him attached to another embassy. Napoleon refused his consent, and would not even allow him the retiring pension to which he was entitled. He died without experiencing any fortunate change in his circumstances.

* The Abbé Delille also went on this journey to Greece.

CHAPTER XI.

Portraits of Madame de Genlis and Madame de Staël.

BEING on terms of intimacy with Madame de Staël, we had opportunities of appreciating the excellence of her heart, and admiring that brilliant genius which has elevated her to the rank of our most celebrated writers in prose. I am convinced that it is impossible to institute a comparison between Madame de Genlis's talent and hers, as the endowments as well as the character of these two eminent women are completely different. In general conversation, Madame de Staël seemed to wish to dazzle rather than to please, and nothing was easier than for her to do so, as she discussed all subjects with uncommon sagacity. She delivered her opinions in a kind of extempore orations to the circle that surrounded her, and to listen was always with her an indispensable requisite. If, while talking, she accidentally put a question, it was introduced in so indeterminate a manner that no one felt called upon to reply, it being certain that the answer would not be heard. Fascinated by her eloquence, her auditors were often induced to adopt her opinions, for, while she spoke, it

Mme. de Staël.

Photo-etching after painting by Gerard.



was difficult not to think with her. Absence and reflection were necessary to enable them to perceive that she had been maintaining opinions contrary to those which they entertained. Her impressions were variable; objects successively appeared to her under different points of view, and, hence, opinions which an impartial sincerity dictated appeared sometimes contradictory. It might have been supposed she wished to shew that, by her mental ingenuity, she could sustain the *pro* and the *con* of every question.

She was forty-five when I first knew her. She still preserved all the tastes of youth, and displayed all that coquetry of the toilet which was rather to be expected in a young woman than in one of her age. She certainly never was handsome; her mouth and nose were decidedly ugly, but her superb eyes wonderfully expressed the passing thoughts of a mind like hers, rich in elevated and energetic ideas. Her hands were perfectly well formed, and she took care on all occasions to display them, by constantly twirling between her fingers a twig of poplar with two or three leaves upon it, which, as she turned it round, caused a gentle rustling that pleased her. This she affected to regard as the obligato accompaniment of her words, and she pretended that she would become dumb were she to be deprived of the dear twig, for which little pieces of rolled paper were substituted in winter. When she went to a party, she was always

offered several of these playthings, and she selected one which appeared likely to serve her during the whole of the evening.

She was kind, obliging, and incapable of taking vengeance for the offences of which she had to complain. She loved those who differed in opinion from her, and argued with sincerity and force. Certain that she would always shine in an intellectual combat, those who sometimes contradicted her were sure to please her,—a singular way of gaining favour with a lady! In general, Madame de Staël had little intercourse with the Genevese, whose severe manners and occasional austerity ill assimilated with talents and a character, the independence of which was not reconcilable with their usual ideas of the nature of female destiny and duties. Her cousin, Madame Necker, and Madame Rilliet-Huber, both celebrated for their wit, were her only intimate companions, but foreign ladies were always proud to visit her, and witness the superiority their sex was capable of obtaining.

She loved company in which she shone, but did not much care for the society of women who were seldom qualified to interest her by their intellectual resources. The factitious manners and conventional phrases of drawing-room parties, she mortally disliked. She would not admit that truth and morality might be recognized under an exterior of affectation;

she could not endure the contracted and hypocritical application given in society to the words "respectable" and "decorous," and would have erased the corresponding term, *les convenances*, from her dictionary. Madame de Staël was never happy except when in the company of men capable of appreciating her talents, and of discussing subjects contrary to the general habits of women. The more extensive the circle, the more was her genius roused. Celebrity was necessary to her existence, and she knew how to obtain it by a different path from that pursued by the rival whom it was the fashion to oppose to her.

Madame de Genlis, far from wishing to display her extensive knowledge, always studies to place herself on a level with those with whom she converses, and never shews that the talent she possesses is greater than theirs. She discovers, with extraordinary promptitude, the subjects with which a visitor is best acquainted, and leads the conversation in a direction which interests and gives confidence to a stranger admitted for the first time to an interview with a woman whose reputation is known throughout Europe. I have heard her say that there is always something to be learned even from men of the most limited information, because there is always at least some one point with which they are well acquainted, and that the only difficulty is to discover it and bring them to talk upon it. The word *amiable* seems to

have been formed to describe the conversation of Madame de Genlis. Endowed with an extraordinary memory, she has read thousands of volumes of which she has forgotten nothing, and her citations are always correct. The great world, and the Court in which she lived, have supplied her with a multitude of anecdotes, which she relates better than any other person, and without the slightest pretension. In her works she is severe, rigid, and intolerant on every topic relating to religion. In society, she is moderate and indulgent, never prying into the actions of others; she asks no questions about their conduct, and is often ready to excuse what many blame with bitterness. She is not easily prevailed upon to adopt an ill opinion of any one, and, on this account, I have often seen her form an intimacy with persons who did not deserve the honour of her acquaintance. It required very convincing proofs to make her put faith in reports injurious to the character of others, for none knew better than she to what unjust lengths calumny may be carried. Having constantly written in favour of that religion which she practised, she considered herself bound in conscience to attack with firmness in her writings everything tending to subvert it, but since she has laid aside her pen, she supports her opinion only with that gentleness which becomes our sex. Her enemies persist in repeating that "she has turned devotee;" this is an absurdity

which ought to be contradicted, for it is so often reproduced that, besides its falsehood, it has the fault of being monotonous. Madame de Genlis, beautiful as an angel, abounding in wit, talent, and elegance, inheriting a considerable fortune, and enjoying an agreeable situation under Her Highness the Duchesse de Chartres, who loaded her with acts of kindness, retired, at the age of thirty-one, into the Convent of Belle - Chasse, to educate Her Highness's children, her own, and her nephew. She superintended every part of their instruction, and only very rarely left the convent to visit her family, or to conduct her pupils to representations of our dramatic masterpieces. In this retreat, where she saw little company, she completed the acquisition of that solid information which distinguishes her, and traced the plan of several works, which she afterwards published, and of the profits of which she made so noble a use, by supporting Mdle. d'Orléans while in emigration more than eighteen months.

The Emperor was able to judge of merit, and he wished to maintain a close correspondence with Madame de Genlis on subjects chosen by herself. On her applications he made several grants in favour of artists and literary men, who were languishing in a state of poverty which was a reproach to the Government. She several times gave advice which was followed, and certainly a bigot was not likely to

become such a favourite with a man of Napoleon's stamp.

Madame de Genlis never refused to perform a service.* Her first work was sold to procure the liberty of some interesting prisoners; she has since repeatedly devoted her works to purposes of beneficence. Her "Life of Madame de Bonchamp," † was written

* This amiable character renders inexplicable the bitterness with which she is attacked in the journals and pamphlets of the day, and even in some works destined to survive temporary circumstances, in consequence of the details of our modern history which they contain. Is it not astonishing, for example, that M. Toulotte, a man of merit and an upright judge, should shut himself up for several months in his closet to criticize bitterly all the works of Madame de Genlis? If they be so bad, why take so much pains to refute them? Oblivion would do better justice to their worthlessness than two large volumes tending to prove that they have no merit. M. Toulotte should have avoided calling attention to things so unworthy, and he would not then have to reproach himself with having so unseasonably attacked a writer whose age of eighty and whose sex ought to have induced him to treat her with more indulgence. The friends of Madame de Genlis may regret this animosity, which would, perhaps, cease were it known that she who is its object never receives any of the blows aimed at her, for she no longer reads newspapers, and whenever she meets with her name in a book she shuts it. She will, therefore, close her long career without becoming acquainted with all the efforts to tarnish her reputation. She will, perhaps, persist in regarding the great interest she has excited as a proof of success, while M. Toulotte will see in that circumstance only the decay of taste. M. Toulotte asserts that the name of Madame de Genlis, up to the period of her marriage, was Saint-Aubin. This is a mistake. She became a canoness at the age of four, was constantly called the Comtesse de Laney, and never changed that title till she married the Comte de Genlis, not secretly, as M. Toulotte affirms, for the union was made public as soon as it took place.

† I have seen Madame de Bonchamp, who was so celebrated for her admirable conduct during the war of La Vendée. She is a little, dark woman, and never could have possessed beauty, for the absence of which, however, the piquant expression of her countenance makes ample amends. On my first introduction to her I felt all that enthusiastic

only on condition that the profits of the publication should be distributed among poor Vendéan families.

She may, perhaps, be accused of the weakness of suffering herself to be too easily prepossessed and influenced by persons towards whom she afterwards became indifferent. But what picture has not its dark side! The shades in Madame de Genlis's character are so slight that they would never be noticed, but that the world is sure to see a fault in everything great and good.

I may conclude by repeating the opinion I have

admiration which her character can never fail to inspire. She followed her husband through every danger, and remained concealed in the trunk of a tree with her children ill of the smallpox. One died of the disease, and the unfortunate mother held the corpse in her arms for thirty-six hours. These incidents, which were related to me by a stranger, affected me deeply. I was all impatience to hear them from the mouth of the heroine; but I must confess that my interest was chilled whenever she began to speak. She narrated her campaigns with all the energy of an old soldier who loves to refer to the battles in which he has distinguished himself. She betrayed an extravagant feeling of satisfaction in alluding to the number of sabre blows that were dealt among the Blues. In short, she appeared to me infinitely too masculine. How differently has Madame de La Rochejaquelein painted her misfortunes! The terrors she felt in exposing herself to the most frightful dangers to save her husband are as natural as they are affecting, and give additional interest to her situation. I heard Madame de Bonchamp relate that, being in a party of Vendéan ladies, where the heat was exceedingly oppressive, one of them requested the loan of her fan, as she had forgotten her own. "I always carry mine about me," said Madame de Bonchamp. "Here it is, at your service." With these words she drew from her pocket a pistol, which she presented to the lady, who was so alarmed that she almost sank to the ground. The Emperor, on learning that Madame de Bonchamp had been left without a fortune, granted her a pension of 6,000 francs, and promised to get her daughter settled. The young lady afterwards married Comte Arthur de Bouillé.

already expressed, which is that no comparison can be drawn between Mesdames de Staël and de Genlis. The writings of the former bear the impress of masculine energy and philosophy, while those of the latter are characterized by feminine grace and sensibility. Madame de Staël was fond of company and the world, where she enjoyed the admiration due to her transcendent talent; Madame de Genlis, on the contrary, has lived in solitude, and devoted herself to the pleasures of country life. The former possessed no agreeable accomplishment, and despised all those graces in which the latter so preëminently excels. We should, therefore, be content to admire the talent, and enjoy the productions, of these two celebrated women without attempting to draw a parallel which forces us to search for faults in either.

CHAPTER XII.

Madame de Staël at Copet. — Her Society. — Amateur Acting of MM. de Sabran, Benjamin Constant, de Sismondi, and de Labédoyère. — M. Catrufo and the Alchemist. — M. de Barante Superseded in the Prefecture of Geneva by the Baron Capelle. — Portraits of the Principal Public Functionaries of Geneva.

MADAME DE STAËL'S affectionate attachment to her father, and her pious veneration for his memory, are generally known. She had his remains embalmed in spirits of wine, and buried beside those of Madame Necker, at Copet.* The place of interment is surrounded by high walls, and the key of the door was kept by Madame de Staël, who permitted none but her children to accompany her when she visited the sacred spot.

A droll story used to be told at Geneva about M. de Bonstetten, the grand bailli of the Pays de Vaud, and a man of talent and information. He had repeatedly and earnestly entreated that Madame de Staël would permit him to visit the tomb of her

* It has been asserted that the bodies are seen floating in marble coffins resembling antique baths; but this was untrue. A monument is erected above them.

father. Continued refusals served only to excite his curiosity, which, at length, became so uncontrollable that he resolved to gratify it by stealth. He accordingly procured a ladder, which with some difficulty he conveyed to the tomb, to reach which it was necessary to pass through the kitchen garden. He placed the ladder against the wall and ascended in safety to the top; but he had now to descend, and for this purpose it was necessary to move the ladder to the inner side of the wall. But in M. de Bonstetten's attempt to execute this difficult operation, the ladder slipped from his grasp, and fell to the ground, leaving the unfortunate bailli perched on the top of the wall, with no alternative but to wait patiently till chance should bring some one to his deliverance. It was useless to call for assistance, the château was so distant that he could have no hope of being heard. He was tormented by the thought that the discovery of his enterprise would give offence to Madame de Staël; and to complete his vexation, he heard the ringing of the dinner-bell, whose summons he was wont to obey with the strictest punctuality. He could scarcely venture to move in his dangerous situation. As for jumping down, that was impossible, for, as I have already observed, the wall was very high, and poor M. de Bonstetten was exceedingly fat. A second peal of the dinner-bell rent his very heart. At length, after two hours of insufferable torment,

Auguste de Staël, alarmed at his mysterious absence at an hour when he was always sure to be seen, went out in quest of him, and, to his astonishment, discovered him in the situation I have described, half dead with alarm and vexation.

The adventure was, I believe, concealed from the knowledge of Madame de Staël, and the excuse of indisposition served to account for M. de Bonstetten's extraordinary want of punctuality. He probably made no other attempt to gratify his indiscreet curiosity.

Madame de Staël could not make herself happy in her exile; she did not like Geneva, and she used often to say that she would rather have a hundred louis per annum in the Rue Jean-Pain-Molet, in Paris, than a hundred thousand livres at Copet. She certainly did nothing that was likely to lead to her recall. She lodged in a furnished hôtel, and was served by the waiters, before whom she used to express in the most unequivocal manner her disapproval of the Government, that is to say, the Emperor. In vain did her friends assure her that spies were set to watch her, and that every word she uttered was reported to the Tuileries. She went on condemning everything that was done, and laughing at the fear with which she inspired *Robespierre on horseback*. To divert the *ennui* that oppressed her, she had plays performed in the theatre at Copet. I was present at several

of these representations, which, I must confess, I thought very indifferent.

Mesdames de Staël and Récamier performed in "*Andromaque*." The latter, who personated the widow, was so exquisitely beautiful that little was thought about her acting. Madame de Staël's appeared to me too extravagant: she declaimed and gesticulated far too much. The other characters were sustained by MM. de Sabran, Benjamin Constant, de Labédoyère (whose future prospects were then so promising), and M. de Sismondi, who, with the Genevese accent, which he retained in full purity, frightfully tortured the fine verses of Racine. On this occasion, M. Schlegel filled the office of prompter. I was present, too, at the performance of "*Gustavus Vasa*," which was nothing else than the play of "*Édouard en Écosse*," with the names of the characters altered; the piece having been prohibited by Napoleon's apprehensive police. I also remember seeing a play which was written by Madame de Staël, and in which M. Benjamin Constant performed the part of the prophet Elijah; he had then such an impediment in his delivery that it was painful to hear him, and no one would have believed that he was destined to be one of our most distinguished orators.

To attend these dramatic performances it was necessary to set out from Geneva at noon, so as to get to Copet at an early hour. Having taken their

seats in the theatre, which was very small, the company began to eat bread and chocolate, which they brought with them as refreshments, and at midnight they returned home, harassed with fatigue and half famished. However, on the very next opportunity, they did not hesitate to subject themselves to a repetition of the same inconveniences, for the honour of being included among the chosen few who were admitted to these solemnities, to which twice as many persons were invited as the theatre could accommodate. The fashion of going to hear good poetry badly delivered became a downright mania. Though I was, like every one else, eager to witness these performances, yet I was, nevertheless, sorry to see Madame de Staël expose herself to criticism which was not always of the most gracious description.

She patronized an Italian named Catrufo, who was established at Geneva as a professor of singing. He afterwards visited Paris, where he composed "*Félicie*," a production which obtained considerable success. Finding himself capable of producing an opera, he requested M. de Sabran to furnish him with a text. M. de Sabran, with his usual obliging disposition, set to work, and very soon produced "*L'Amant Alchimiste*," an opera in three acts, intended for representation at the theatre of Geneva. Not attaching the least importance to the work, he candidly told Catrufo that it was worth nothing; but that with the help of

agreeable music it might pass off as many other things did, and that it was written only to afford the composer an opportunity of bringing himself into notice.

It got reported through the town that M. de Sabran had said "Anything is good enough for the Genevese." Only those who were unacquainted with the good sense and amiable manners of M. de Sabran could have supposed him capable of such an observation, which was the more absurd, inasmuch as the inhabitants of Geneva are exceedingly well informed; a fact of which no one was more competent to judge than M. de Sabran. Nevertheless, the report gained credit. The condemnation of the opera was determined on, and on the evening preceding its representation the author and composer received intimation of its doom. They resigned themselves to the fate which they had no power to avert. In the morning, M. de Sabran purchased a number of whistles, which he distributed among his friends with the request that they would oblige him by taking part in the concert which was to supersede the opera. The theatre was crowded to excess, and as soon as Madame de Staël entered her box a confused murmur announced the impending storm. The piece, whatever might have been its merit, must have fallen, for everything concurred to favour the cabal that was formed against it. The scene opened with a trio by the alchemist, his servant, and his niece, each armed with a pair of bellows,

and lustily vociferating, "*Soufflons, soufflez.*" ("Blow, let us blow.") Of course, nothing could be easier than to convert this chorus into "*Sifflons, sifflez.*" ("Hiss, let us hiss.") The audience immediately seized the joke, and the uproar never ceased till the curtain dropped. During this scene of tumult M. de Sabran indited the following epigram :

*"A l'alchimiste épargnez les sifflets,
Plaignez plutôt sa malencontre extrême,
Car cet ouvrage est si plat, si mauvais,
Que l'auteur est forcé de le siffler lui-même."*

M. de Sabran, who is the well-known author of some pretty fables, is subject to singular fits of abstraction. To the following I was myself a witness :

When at Copet he was accustomed to walk out every day after dinner. On one occasion, when he was unusually late in returning home, Madame de Staël began to fear that something had happened to him. At length we saw him enter in the most singular plight imaginable: his hair was hanging down in complete disorder, and his legs wet up to his knees.

"Where have you been?" inquired Madame de Staël.

"I have been walking, madame."

"But you are dreadfully wet; you must have fallen into the water."

"No, it is nothing but the dew. I have never been out of the great walk near the mill."

“Oh! then you have certainly walked into the water, for the course of the stream has been turned, and it now runs right across that walk.”

M. de Sabran was the first to laugh at his unfortunate blunder, on which he made a thousand droll remarks. With M. de Sabran's solid good qualities he can well afford to plead guilty to a little failing, of which, however, he could never be accused when he had to serve a friend, or to perform a duty to the excellent mother whom he has recently lost.*

At Copet I was first introduced to M. Prosper de Barante,† who was then very young. He was at that time, I believe, only known as the author of “*Tableau de la Littérature Française.*” He had just completed the interesting “Memoirs of the Marquise de La Rochejaquelein,” which were not then published. I was fortunate enough to hear some chapters of the work read, and they appeared to me, as they have since appeared to every one, charmingly written, and full of interesting and curious facts. That which to me gives them a peculiar charm is the extreme simplicity with which the heroine relates all that she did,

* Madame de Sabran's second husband was the celebrated Chevalier de Boufflers, whose existence she cheered by her graces and talents, her devoted affection, and that inalterable sweetness of temper which she seems to have bequeathed to her son.

† Now a peer of France, and a member of the French Academy. For the first of these titles he is indebted to the esteem due to his honourable character and his administrative talents. The second is the just reward of his extensive and valuable literary labours.

guided by the dictates of her own heart, which enabled her to surmount the fears natural to her sex and her timid character. This natural timidity enhances our admiration of the resolution with which she faced danger, and tremblingly exposed herself to almost certain death. This is the sort of heroism which becomes a woman, and not that of a grenadier. The Amazon braves the cannon's mouth because she feels no terror; nature ought to have created her man.

M. de Barante has ingeniously imparted to his narrative a charming air of natural and feminine grace, without sacrificing the energy requisite in several of the descriptions. Since this production he has acquired strong claims to the admiration of the literary world; but I must be pardoned for preferring to all his other works that to which I have just referred, and which in a powerful degree excited my interest.

His conversation sufficiently indicated the intelligence which was one day destined to distinguish him. When in company he spoke little and listened attentively, and seemed to be maturing that talent which is now so amply developed. Madame de Staël entertained a warm friendship for him, and used often to say that he would acquire a reputation, which he was himself far from thinking about.

This prophecy has been fulfilled. But Madame de Staël, however much she might be gratified by this

confirmation of her opinion, was cruelly vexed at the dismissal of M. de Barante, senior, from the situation of Prefect of Geneva. The *Moniteur* informed him that Baron Capelle was to become his successor. The Baron was at first very unpopular among the Genevese, who regretted the loss of M. de Barante, and a thousand stories were circulated respecting the new prefect. One of the best accredited was that he had been a strolling actor before his acquaintance with the Princess Eliza, who was the origin of his good fortune.

It is said that a company of French players, who paid a visit to Geneva, could not obtain permission to perform there because the mayor, a very serious personage, refused to sanction anything that was at variance with the austere manners of his countrymen. The fine gentleman of the company, more persevering than the manager, who had contentedly packed up all his theatrical paraphernalia, determined to have an interview with the prefect, and for that purpose repaired to his house. The prefect, hearing a noise in his antechamber, came out to inquire the cause of it. What was his astonishment, on seeing a stranger rush forward to embrace him, exclaiming, with extreme volubility,—

“Oh, my old comrade, I am overjoyed to meet you here! You have come out of the prefect’s cabinet, therefore I presume you know him. Do, I entreat

you, use your influence to induce him to let us have a few performances. The arts, you know, must be protected. Oh, you seem to forget; but your old friends do not. Heaven inspired me with the determination to come here and implore the prefect; but you will do us this kind office, my good fellow, will you not?"

All the clerks of the prefecture witnessed this strange scene, and the embarrassment of the poor prefect may be easily imagined. The company of players, however, obtained leave to stay some time in the town.

Whether this anecdote be true or false, I cannot pretend to say. It was transmitted to me from Geneva, where M. de Capelle was ultimately very well liked, though far from being honoured and respected like M. de Barante.

Having mentioned the public authorities of Geneva, I cannot refrain from saying a few words respecting General Duspuch, the commandant of the garrison, who never used to join any parties on the lake because he said he was as much afraid of water as of fire.

His personal appearance perfectly coincided with his pompous and formal manners. He discharged the duties of his post with the most absurd punctilio, never suffering any ceremony, however superfluous, to be neglected; for instance, he used regularly to close the gates of the town, though all the surround-

ing country was occupied by our triumphant armies. His costume was as preposterous as that of an old military commandant in a farce; his hair was powdered and frizzed in the fashion styled *à l'oiseau royal*, and he was constantly armed with an inoffensive sword and an enormous gold-headed cane. He was, however, a very worthy man, and exceedingly good-natured if not impeded in the execution of his military prerogatives, which his dignified spouse respected no less than he did. The poor general was a perfect blank in intellect. The following little anecdotes will shew that Napoleon formed a fair estimate of his value when he dismissed him on a pension. It was, I believe, continued till the Restoration.

The city of Geneva is built on very unequal ground. Some one, seeing the general slowly ascending the principal street, which is exceedingly steep, observed that he was right not to hurry, lest he should slip.

“Yes, yes, I follow the principle laid down in the Gospel,” replied he, quoting the Italian proverb, “*Chi va piano va sano.*”

An attractive piece was produced at the theatre of Geneva, under the title of “*Le Tyran Domestique.*” The general took his family to see it, and, at the conclusion of the performance, being asked how he liked it, he observed:

“I think the piece is very good, but it has a very silly title; for the *domestique* (the servant), instead of

being a tyrant, is the best fellow in the world, and it is a shame that he should be so misrepresented in the play-bills."

This curious blunder respecting the title of the piece shewed how much the poor general understood of the plot!

CHAPTER XIII.

M. Eynard of Geneva.—The Greeks Demetrius and Carianthès Dance the *Pyrrhica* at Madame de Staël's.—M. Rocca Meets Madame de Staël at a Ball Given by M. Hottinger.—M. Rocca, the Elder.—His Origin.—M. Huber, Nephew of the Friend of Voltaire.—Touching Trait of a Young Genevese and Her Blind Lover.—MM. Toppfer and de la Rive, Landscape Painters.—MM. Massot and Arlaud, Portrait Painters.—Genevese Manners.

I MET M. Eynard at Geneva. He came from Florence, where he had played the brilliant but dangerous part of the Sovereign's favourite. His countenance was then agreeable, though he was harassed by fatigue. His talents were advantageously spoken of, but the celebrity he has since obtained throughout Europe was far from being anticipated. He owes it to his zealous support of the cause of the Greeks, whose courageous struggle for the recovery of their independence buries individual degradation in oblivion. Looked at in mass they are heroes, and it is pleasing to have to view with admiration a nation which has bequeathed us so many brilliant recollections.

There were at Geneva two Greeks, who frequently visited Madame de Staël. In me their names excited an emotion which was ridiculed, but which I could not repress. One was named Demetrius, the other Carianthès. They were ugly, but there was an expression in their eyes which I never observed in other men; one might read in their looks a presage of the restoration of their country. They danced the *pyrrhica*, and Mdlle. de Staël * and I learned it. I certainly cannot call myself brave, but when holding these Greeks by the hands, and performing the movements of this dance, the air of which is very martial, I thought myself capable of the greatest acts of courage. Perhaps a single flash of a pistol would have restored me to myself again; but for the time I assuredly had a fit of real courage.

Poor Carianthès died in a hospital! He was attached to a Russian (M. de Balk), who constantly travelled; tired with carrying about a sick man, he had the cruelty to send him to the nearest hospital, where his sufferings were soon ended. Demetrius returned to Greece, where, perhaps more fortunate than his companion, he has perished gloriously, defending his country against his oppressors.

I believe it was about this period, in 1808, that Madame de Staël first saw M. Rocca, whom she

* She afterwards married the Duc de Broglie. Beauty, wit, extensive information, sweetness of disposition, and perfectly amiable conduct, render her an example for the women of her age.

afterwards married. M. Hottinger, a rich banker, gave a grand ball in celebration of the marriage of his friend, M. James Portalès, who had just espoused Mdlle. de Falconnet.

M. Rocca, who was a native of Geneva, came on his way to the Peninsula, there to visit his family. He appeared at the ball in a Hussar uniform, and took his departure next morning for Spain. I was dancing with him when Madame de Staël entered, followed, as was usual, by a numerous train. She was in a rich dress, but it did not make her appear to advantage.

“Is that a far-famed woman?” said M. Rocca to me. “She is very ugly, and I detest such a straining for effect.” “She is so accustomed to receive the homage of all that she is entitled to praise for being so condescending and indulgent.” “Oh! all that you can say of her good qualities will never persuade me that she does right in coming here at the head of a whole brigade; and, assuredly, I shall never make one in the troop of slaves she drags after her. Like the victors in the ancient triumphs, she wishes to count her prisoners; I shall not swell the number.”

Madame de Staël was struck with M. Rocca’s fine countenance, which was more embellished than disfigured by a large scar. Though young, he wore the decoration of the Legion of Honour. After a while, finding that M. Rocca paid no attention to her, she

took umbrage at his neglect, and observed that the man was very well, but that his self-sufficient air was quite offensive to her. However, the indifference thus shewn for her, to which she was not accustomed, was, perhaps, precisely the cause of the favours she afterwards lavished on a man destined to become so dear to her as to make her change a name which she had rendered illustrious.

Some years after, M. Rocca returned to Geneva, covered with wounds. His sufferings were a new motive of interest, and he was fortunate enough to obtain a full return of the love which he conceived for this extraordinary woman. He found opportunities for giving her proof of his affection, and finally had the happiness to induce her to espouse him. He could not survive her loss, and died a few months after her.

M. Rocca's father was not a man of such sensibility as his son : at the death of his wife he accompanied the funeral, on foot, as is the custom in Geneva, to the cemetery outside the walls of the city. A friend, who met him on his return from the melancholy duty, put on a long face, as usual on such occasions, and asked after his health, in the most sorrowful tone imaginable.

"Why, thank you, pretty hearty," replied M. Rocca; "that little walk has quite set me up. There is nothing like a little fresh air in the country."

Next day was Sunday; M. Rocca went, in deep mourning, to the house of a lady who used to see company on that day. He knocked; a female servant opened, and stared with astonishment at the unexpected visitor. Marvelling at seeing no lights in the hall, M. Rocca asked the maid whether her lady was indisposed.

“No, sir, but madame has no party to-night.”

“Indeed, why not?”

“It is, sir, because —”

“Well, because what?”

“Because Madame Rocca is dead, and as my mistress was her friend —”

“Ah! that’s very true. But how shall I spend my evening? You may tell your mistress I think her wonderfully silly.”

And away he went, grumbling at the absurdity of such customs.

It will with difficulty be believed that, during a residence of three years at Geneva, I never went to Switzerland. I was extremely desirous of visiting that country, but I was not married, and I could not travel alone. My parents disliked frequent moving about, and our excursions were confined to Copet, and some places in the neighbourhood of Geneva and Ferney, of which I shall give an account in the next chapter.

We frequently visited an interesting and remark-

able man, M. Huber, nephew of the friend of Voltaire. He had been blind since the age of seventeen. At that period he fell in love with a rich young lady, who returned his affection; but their parents opposed their union, and they were separated. A few months afterwards he was afflicted with gutta serena, which deprived him entirely of sight, a loss which he felt the more severely because he was no longer able to see the object of his affection. He was sent to Paris, in the hope that a cure might be effected by couching; but he obtained no relief, and returned in despair to Geneva. Mdlle. Lullin, having been made acquainted with his misfortune, declared to her relations that she would readily have submitted to their will, if the man of her choice could have done without her.

“But,” said she, “now that he requires a guide to be every moment with him, nothing shall prevent me from being united to him.”

Her family became more obstinate than ever in withholding their consent; but when she was of age, she respectfully addressed to them the citations required by law. Mdlle. Lullin refused several brilliant offers, always saying:

“He is so unhappy, I should be base to forsake him.”

At last she married the object of her disinterested affection, and their mutual good conduct soon obtained for them pardon for their disobedience.

Madame Huber always preserved the character of a most respectable and irreproachable spouse.

This excellent woman soon discovered a thousand means of supplying the wants which her husband's unfortunate calamity occasioned. During the war she formed whole armies with pins of various sizes, and thus enabled him to distinguish the positions of the different corps; she stuck the pins in a map, and thus gave her unfortunate husband a correct idea of the movements of the troops. A method by which he was enabled to write was invented for him, and his wife formed plans in relief of the places they inhabited. In a word, she had but one occupation, that of making the life of her husband happy. To such a point did this amiable woman carry her intentions, that M. Huber asserted that he would be miserable were he to cease to be blind.

"I should not know," said he, "to what extent a person in my situation could be beloved; besides, to me, my wife is always young, fresh, and pretty, and that is no light matter."

M. Huber, like most of the Genevese, was so well educated at seventeen, that his studies might be regarded as finished. He had a great taste for natural history. He made his wife read to him a number of works on that subject, and particularly relative to bees, of which he was very fond; but he discovered that all the works which treated of those insects

were very imperfect. He requested Madame Huber to provide herself with a magnifying-glass, and to examine carefully the formation and habits of the bee. With her assistance he made several discoveries, which he published under the title of "*Recherches sur les Abeilles*," a work which is very highly esteemed. To extensive knowledge, M. Huber joined an extraordinary memory. He related in a most graceful style a great variety of interesting anecdotes. He was a good musician, and nothing could be more affecting than to hear him sing the scene between Œdipus and his daughter.

His uncle, who was a friend and enthusiastic admirer of Voltaire, had the features of the great man so engraved in his mind that he was in the habit of reproducing them in various ways, without any apparent effort of recollection. The best portrait of those features, which, from their varied expression, could with difficulty be correctly transferred to canvas, was finished after M. Huber's sketches. It is alleged that, as he was one day breaking bread and giving bits to his dog, he managed so that the piece which remained in his hand was an exact silhouette of the man to whom he was completely devoted. Some pictures of this singular description are carefully preserved in his family. He cut out and pinked in a most perfect style. The Genevese have a particular talent for this art, by

which they execute charming landscapes, with figures and animals; they generally use vellum or paste-board, and do not assist the effect by drawing; notwithstanding which, the different lines of the view and the leaves of the trees are perfectly well defined. The works of M. Lullin and Madame Boissier in this way were astonishing; they cut out while walking, without seeming to think of what they were doing. Nothing could be more interesting than to see thus starting from under their scissors objects which the pencil could not have better expressed.

Several artists reside at Geneva, whose works are much esteemed in Paris. Among them are MM. Toppfer and de la Rive, landscape painters; and Massot and Arlaud, whose portraits are remarkable for their striking resemblance. It would be difficult, I believe, to find within an equal space such variety of talent as is to be met within this small but very populous town; and assuredly, there nowhere else exists a more decided national spirit.

When I lived at Geneva, there were still in the town a great number of wooden houses, the doors of which were so narrow that it was difficult to introduce the engines when fire occurred. The company of firemen consisted of all the young men of the town, who received honours according as their actions deserved distinction. They were, therefore, always ready to expose themselves gratuitously to danger;

the glory of saving a fellow citizen made them ambitious of encountering the greatest perils. When a fire broke out in any part of the town, the tocsin was rung, and the alarum drum beat; nothing could restrain the young men, when they heard these signals, from flying to succour the distressed. On more than one occasion I have seen them leave a brilliant ball and hasten, in full dress, to the fire, where they remained until it was extinguished.

A terrible conflagration took place during the period of my residence. Seven houses were burned, and twenty-two lives were lost. The theatre was shut for a fortnight, for nobody could think of partaking of any amusement until the disaster was in some degree repaired. A subscription was opened for the victims, and it was soon filled.

On all important occasions the Genevese act in the same manner; their domestic parsimony may, therefore, be pardoned. They are niggardly to themselves, but never when called upon to relieve the distress of their fellow citizens.

It is surprising that their fire-escape has not been adopted in France; it may be raised in two minutes to the highest story of a house; a large sack is attached to the upper extremity. Some of the unfortunate inhabitants, who may not be able to escape by a burning staircase, throw themselves into this sack, and its weight in descending raises another to rescue

more lives. The Emperor Alexander applied for models of this machine, and it pleased him so much that he sent presents of superb rings to the mayor, the inventor, and the artist who made the drawings.

The finest promenade in Geneva, the Bastions, was deserted. The statue of Rousseau had been erected there in 1792, and at its foot were executed the fusillades of the Reign of Terror. From that dreadful period, every inhabitant of Geneva avoided that spot. If any one was seen walking there, a bet might be laid that he was a stranger.

The statue was pulled down, and numerous houses have been built on the promenade. It is no longer possible to tell the place where crimes were committed which may be pardoned but cannot be forgotten.

At Geneva we also met M. Sybourg, a Swiss by birth, who had long been sub-governor to the Grand Dukes of Russia; he had left St. Petersburg, enriched by the gifts of his pupils, and he made a most generous use of his fortune by extending his aid to all the members of his family. His extensive information, firmness of character, rigorous probity, and regularity of conduct, rendered him worthy of the difficult task he had undertaken. The Emperors Alexander and Nicholas were chiefly educated by him, a fact which sufficiently proves that a fortunate choice had been made of their instructor. He used to relate interest-

ing anecdotes of the Court of Russia ; but the Sovereigns to whom they refer have ceased to exist, and the praises which their repetition might call forth are now the property of history.

M. August Bontems, Captain of Engineers, arrived about this time from Persia, and excited general attention, in consequence of that interest which is always attached to a traveller who has encountered great dangers, and has extricated himself with courage. He formed part of General Gardanne's expedition. After suffering much persecution he obtained the friendship of the Prince Royal of Persia, who granted him the Order of the Sun, the insignia of which, and of the Legion of Honour, which he had received long before, he wore together. Having brought with him a complete Persian dress, he was so obliging as sometimes to appear in it, to satisfy the curiosity of the ladies who were admitted to the society of his mother, who was herself eminently distinguished. She was worthy to be a descendant of one of her ancestors, the celebrated Lefort, who was the friend of Peter the Great.

The preparations for our departure from Geneva were made with sincere regret ; we left real friends behind us. The three years I spent there passed away agreeably, and I reckon them the most tranquil of my life. While there, I had at least the satisfaction of experiencing no violent chagrin ; I was not

persecuted by odious calumnies, and I had not to endure all the bitterness of ingratitude! Why did I not remain there? I should have escaped the afflictions which have assailed me; I might have been able to look back without regret, and direct, with confidence, my thoughts to the future.

I wish to record the profound gratitude I feel for the generous testimonies of friendship which were so kindly bestowed on me in Geneva. There is, in particular, one family to whom I am indebted for the most pleasing moments I passed there. I have no need to name that circle, for, if I say that all amiable qualities were therein united, who can fail to recognize it? I repress my desire to declare what I owe, because to speak of two cherished beings removed in the midst of their career would be to probe the incurable wounds of the unfortunate parents. I weep, and am silent.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ferney.—Voltaire's House.—Description of His Bedchamber.—The Empress's Journey to Geneva.—Affectionate Reception of Her Majesty.—MM. Pictet, Boissier, and Prevost.—A Fête on the Lake.—The Viceroy and Vice-Queen Visit Their Mother.—Kind Reception to the Empress.—She Visits all the Public Establishments.

I WENT to Ferney with the conviction that the unfavourable picture of this retreat, given in Madame de Genlis's "Memoirs," was somewhat exaggerated. I imagined that her dislike of Voltaire had caused her to view everything through the veil of prejudice, and that, contrary to her usual custom, she had but ill observed what she had described. I was sure that I should find something to admire in every object at Ferney; the place created by Voltaire could not fail to be beautiful, grand, and magnificent. To justify my favourable anticipations, I endeavoured to forget the insipidity and tedious monotony of the *Délices*.* In a word, I was determined to see no fault in the residence of the celebrated philosopher. At Ferney,

* A house at the gate of Geneva, long occupied by Voltaire, who gave it the above name. It belonged to the descendants of the celebrated Doctor Tronchin.

Voltaire diffused so many blessings around him that to me the spot appeared, of all others, to inspire an exalted idea of his character; I was thus predisposed to be pleased with everything I should see.

On arriving at Ferney, I found no reason to alter my opinion. I saw a number of houses built under the direction of Voltaire; the structures were simple, tasteful, and elegant, and seemed calculated to ensure comfort to their occupants. I saw a beautiful chapel, also erected by the man who often seemed inclined to repel the mild and sublime consolations of religion. I grew more and more impatient to view the château, and I reached the gate full of favourable prepossessions.

I was, however, suddenly disenchanted on beholding a very common-looking house, the access to which was through a dirty, crooked lane, just broad enough to allow a carriage to turn. The entrance to a place which was so long the abode of genius should present something of a majestic character, and not resemble paltry avenues which are met with in the environs of Paris. The approach to Voltaire's habitation should be divested of everything mean; I was told that M. de Badé, the owner of the place, had made great alterations on the exterior of this château, which ought to have been held sacred as an historical monument. The numerous foreigners whom curiosity continually attracts to Ferney must form a strange

opinion of the taste and understanding of M. de Badé. He must be ranked among the Goths, distinguished by the title of the *Bande noire*, who destroyed or disfigured everything which deserved to be respected.

We entered Voltaire's bedchamber, and here the man who shewed us over the château detailed a number of particulars which we should readily have guessed without his assistance. His unmoveable countenance and tedious manner sufficiently denoted that he had repeated the same story over and over again for the last ten years. He took the trouble to explain things which required no explanation, and instead of being useful to visitors, his tiresome tongue rendered him insufferably annoying.

The chamber is small, dirty, and much out of repair; the curtains of the bed, which are of thick damask, are hanging in tatters, for every visitor avails himself of the privilege of clipping off a scrap as a relic of the *great man*. This sacrilege should not be permitted. Everything in the room bears melancholy traces of neglect; the whole furniture consists of some chairs, which are nearly all broken, a shabby table, and a few wretched portraits in crayons, among which are one of Lekain in the costume of Orosman, and one of the Marquise du Châtelet. A small mausoleum of black and white marble, in very bad taste, fills a niche in front of the chimney; it contains the heart of Voltaire. A number

of obscure names written with pencil are scribbled over the monument, the walls of the room, the bed, etc. How can people thus profane what death, at least, should render sacred !

Just as we were about to retire from the apartment, the examination of which had powerfully excited our feelings, our *cicerone*, without the least ceremony, asked us for *something to drink*. It would be difficult to conceive anything more revolting than such a request made in such a place.

The garden is far from pretty ; it contains a long arbor, which Voltaire used as a promenade, and in which he frequently wrote. He certainly could find no inspiration in such a place, for nothing can be more gloomy than this long alley of elm-trees, between which a few narrow openings here and there afforded a distant view of part of the lake. In short, Ferney is interesting only from its associations. The environs of Geneva present so many pleasant residences and so many delightful prospects, that it is difficult to conceive how Voltaire could have made choice of such a spot amidst the beauties with which that picturesque country abounds.

There was something like coquetry in thus taking up his abode in a place devoid of all natural charms. He must have thought his own celebrity sufficiently attractive, a belief which was no doubt well warranted by the fact that people from all quarters of the world

solicited the honour of being introduced to him. The idle and the vain thronged to Ferney just for the sake of saying, "*I have seen Voltaire.*" The learned went to form a more close acquaintance with that universal genius, who may, perhaps, be accused of having led many of his admirers into a wrong course.

At this period Josephine was travelling under the name of the Comtesse d' Arberg; she could not have chosen a more honourable title. She came to Geneva to see the Viceroy and the Vice-Queen, who had arrived from Milan, for the purpose of passing a few days with her. We had not seen her for a long time; for, as I believe I have before stated, our fallen fortunes kept us banished from a Court where luxury was carried to the utmost extreme. On account of some old obligations, my mother conceived it to be our duty to pay our respects to the Empress at a time when Her Majesty was forsaken by persons to whom she had been a thousand times more serviceable than to us. We, therefore, begged the honour of being presented to her, and we received a most gracious answer, appointing an early audience.

The Empress put up at the "Hôtel d' Angleterre," situated at Sécheron, a beautiful village near Geneva, on the banks of the lake. We went there, expecting that the presence of the exalted personages would occasion an extraordinary commotion, and that all accommodation would be denied to private individuals,

to make room for the Court. How we were surprised to find everything as quiet as before the arrival of the Empress, who travelled in no more state than a private lady of fortune.

Madame d' Audenarde, who filled the situation of Dame du Palais after the divorce, ushered us into a very small apartment without any antechamber; this was Her Majesty's bedchamber. She was in a kind of half dress, but looked infinitely better than when seated on the Imperial Throne. Her figure, though partaking more of *embonpoint* than formerly, was still as elegant as ever; her complexion was less brown than it used to be, and the charm of her dignified manners rendered her the most fascinating of women. Her Majesty revived the recollection of many circumstances of our former acquaintance, and she sent for the Viceroy on purpose to present us to him. He was, like his charming mother, the sworn enemy of all etiquette, and he behaved to us just as he was wont to do when we knew him only as *Eugène de Beauharnais*. The Empress informed us that she was to set out next day for Paris, and as she understood it was likewise our intention shortly to visit the capital *par excellence*, she added that she would be happy to see us at Malmaison and Navarre, not to pay a visit of ceremony but to stay some time with her. This invitation we regarded as one that would be soon forgotten; but we were, nevertheless, much touched with

the kindness of Her Majesty, who, with the greatest affability, conversed with us for upwards of an hour.

Whilst we were with her she received the visits of many distinguished individuals of the town, among whom were M. Maurice, the Mayor, and Professors Pictet, Boissier, and Prévost, justly celebrated for their knowledge and excellent character. She discoursed with them on science and art, with a facility which astonished them. But Josephine could talk on any subject, and on all well. She listened to their answers with a kind attention which gained their confidence by shewing that she was interested in what she heard. She made quotations from several authors, but without any appearance of pedantry, and we should have been surprised at the varied acquirements she displayed had we not known that the Emperor used to call her his *agenda*. In relating an anecdote, Napoleon would pretend to forget the date in order to give Josephine an opportunity of correcting him.

On the day of our interview with the Empress, there was to be a grand festival at Geneva, called the Festival of the Lake. The inhabitants of the houses on the enchanting banks of the lake sent out their boats richly ornamented and rowed by men dressed in white, with coloured girdles round their waists. Many of the boats were filled by musicians, and in the midst of this little flotilla the *grand city barge*

advanced majestically, rowed by the National Guards, the band playing appropriate airs. In the evening a magnificent display of fireworks was exhibited on the bridge, and thousands of rockets fired from the boats mingled with the shouts of the immense crowd which lined the shore. No description can convey an adequate idea of the magnificence of the illuminated lake, or of the aspect of Mont Blanc rearing his head majestically amidst the glare of the fireworks. The reports of the rockets echoing among the mountains served to heighten the effect of a scene which can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

A boat drawn by two swans was prepared for the Empress, and the other boats on the lake having pressed closely around it, they were directed to put back; Her Majesty, however, begged that they might be permitted to approach.

"I wish," said she, "to let people see how much I am delighted with everything around me, and how pleased I am with the reception I have experienced. It is so gratifying to be beloved!"

These words were repeated from mouth to mouth, and cries of "*Vive l'impératrice! Vive le vice-roi,*" proved how truly she was beloved.

She visited the manufactories, at which she made many purchases, and she quitted Geneva with the blessings of the whole population. The upper classes of society had an opportunity of appreciating the

elegance of her manners, the soundness of her understanding, the extensive information she had acquired since her second marriage, her taste for the arts, etc. With the poor, whom she never forgot, she left abundant testimonials of her benevolence; for, amidst scenes of tumult and festivity, the Empress thought of the distressed, and enabled them to participate in her pleasure.

Thus has Josephine acquired a celebrity which time can never efface. The praises of the unfortunate are imperishable, and *the memory of good Sovereigns lives when great ones are forgotten.*

CHAPTER XV.

Visit to the Glaciers. — Imprudence of Two Parisian Belles. — The Albinos of Chamouny. — The Guide Balmat, and M. de Sassure. — Trait of Courage in an Innkeeper's Maid. — A Cretin of Chamouny. — The Travellers' Album. — Madame de Staël Refuses to Ascend the Glaciers.

Two ladies of my acquaintance, who had come to Savoy on an excursion of pleasure, wished me to accompany them in an ascent of the glaciers. We set out on a gloomy day, so that we could not half enjoy the beauty of the enchanting prospects which momentarily present themselves between Geneva and Chamouny. The sun cast not a single ray on the elegant cascade of Chède, its charming lake, and the valley of Maglan ; but, notwithstanding this, the effect was delightful. Before I set out, I made inquiries as to the most proper dress for such an excursion. My companions, two pretty women just arrived from Paris, did not adopt the same precaution, and they soon had cause to regret their want of foresight. As we ascended the mountains, a thick fog in which we were enveloped completely uncurled their feathers, which drooped over their hats in the most incon-

venient way. Their light dresses, open at the throat, afforded no protection against the frost, and their thin-soled slippers were almost worn out before they reached the inn. I, on the contrary, was so comfortably equipped in a black straw bonnet, thick travelling shoes, and a good warm wadded mantle, that I scarcely felt the cold.

On the summit of Montanvert, whence we descended to the sea of ice, we were provided with thick coverings of striped woollen cloth, and this costume was rendered more burlesque by large bouquets of rhododendron, which, however, we put aside. It would be vain in me to enter upon any description of the scene which now opened to our view. Many celebrated writers have failed in their attempt to convey an idea of its grandeur. The sublime confusion which nature here presents, the immense height of the icy peaks, resembling innumerable castles, the enormous chasms shaped like funnels, where one false step must be followed by certain death, the deep silence, broken only by the noise of falling avalanches or by the plaintive pipes of the shepherds, who are imprisoned among these regions during many months of the year,—all excite a mingled feeling of melancholy and admiration. While we contemplated the awful grandeur of the surrounding scene, tears unconsciously gushed from our eyes, and my fair companions seemed surprised to find their attention engrossed by any-

thing besides the elegance of their dress, which might adorn though it could not add to their charms.

Perhaps I might, with advantage, introduce here some romantic episode to give interest to this brief account of an excursion which will ever remain engraven in my memory; but I have promised to adhere strictly to the truth. Honesty and sincerity may, perhaps, procure for me that notice to which I can lay no claim on the score of talent. I must, therefore, candidly acknowledge the mortifying truth, that I encountered no extraordinary adventure on my ascent to the glaciers.

I stopped, as everybody does, at the fountain which Florian's "Claudine" has immortalized. I gathered strawberries on the ice, and brought home some valuable plants, of which I made a herbal.* I saw a chamois, a royal eagle, and the Albinos. These people were born at Chamouny, and having travelled through all Europe had made a little fortune by exhibiting themselves. On their return home they purchased a flock of sheep, which they tend themselves. Their hair is perfectly white, as are also their eyelashes and eyebrows. Their red eyes are perpetually in motion, and the light causes them such pain that they wear hats with broad brims for shades.

* M  hul, the composer, whose name is connected with all that is estimable in talent, genius, and virtue, earnestly requested to have my herbal. He was then given over by his physicians. I gave it him, and he died a few months after.

If any one suddenly snatch off these hats they fall down, apparently suffering great pain, which, as they say, is as severe as if a penknife were thrust into their eyes; they speak English well, and they collected a great deal of money by exhibiting their ugly faces in different parts of Great Britain.

In reply to some questions I put to them, they informed me that their parents were in no respect like themselves, but that their mother (now dead) had been frightened by a wild rabbit, to which circumstance they attributed their peculiar appearance. After her death her body was opened by some medical men, with the view of ascertaining whether there was anything peculiar in her conformation; but nothing tended to throw any light on a phenomenon which has excited the astonishment of the faculty. I questioned them about their travels; and the younger, who evinced great natural intelligence, spoke very sensibly concerning the countries he had visited. Like all mountaineers, he preferred his native home to every country he had seen; and there is good reason for this preference, for the mountains of Chamouny combine all that is beautiful and sublime in nature. He told me that he and his brother were both married, but that their children, all of whom were daughters, were unfortunately *pretty brunettes*; therefore, added he, they will never gain by their faces what we have got by ours. They are both

remarkable for their mild disposition, and are beloved by all the inhabitants of the valley. Travellers always present them with a little money, which they receive with thanks, and lay by to increase the portion of their *unfortunate* daughters.

We were conducted on this expedition by Balmat, surnamed *Mont Blanc*, from having been the guide of M. de Saussure. He is a very remarkable man.

Although still the peasant in language and habits, his conversation is both interesting and instructive. He has an extensive knowledge of mineralogy and botany, and is acquainted with all the peculiarities of the interesting region in which he dwells, and where he frequently comes in contact with educated people from all parts of the world. He has thus collected a multitude of anecdotes, which he relates with a degree of energy that is rarely met with in persons of more polished manners. He never forgets any remarkable person he sees, and he gives natural and animated descriptions of them. When at a loss for words to express his idea, he has recourse to gestures which cannot be misunderstood.

He told us that *only one woman* had ascended Mont Blanc to the height attained by M. de Saussure. She was an innkeeper's servant girl, who declared that she was ashamed of the want of courage displayed by her sex ; and she signified her intention to accompany the first travellers who should attempt the excursion.

In vain she was assured that she could never undergo the fatigue of so difficult an ascent, that she must sleep for two whole nights on the ice, etc.; nothing could alter her determination, and she shortly after joined a party of two Englishmen and seven guides, who set out on the perilous expedition. The girl had not accomplished more than half of her journey when she became ill! She was urged to renounce her project, but without effect; she declared that she would rather die than descend without placing her foot upon the spot where M. de Saussure had stood. The higher she ascended, the weaker she became; her strength, but not her courage, forsook her. On reaching a certain height, the excessive cold produced violent vomiting, but when she was urged to go back she was seized with such dreadful nervous attacks that there was no alternative but to let her encounter the danger she had resolved to brave.

“Carry me, drag me,” she cried; “only let me touch that stone which perpetuates the immortal enterprise, and I shall die content.”

At length, after great fatigue and suffering, she accomplished her object, and inscribed her name beside that of the celebrated traveller. The guides were obliged to carry her during nearly the whole of the descent, and she remained six weeks between life and death. I have, unluckily, forgotten the name of this heroine; I noted it down in a memo-

random book, which I lost in the course of my movements.

Balmat introduced the breed of Merino sheep into his beloved valley, for which he received a gold medal from the Minister of the Interior. This token of honour he shewed us with great satisfaction. It had been transmitted to him through the medium of his *friend* De Barante, for so he called the Prefect of Geneva, at whose table he often dined.

There was, at Chamouny, a deaf and dumb man in imbecility — almost a cretin. It could scarcely have been imagined that such an unfortunate being could have been of any use in the world; however, he was rendered useful in the following manner:

If by accident a calf, a sheep, or — as it has happened twice within the last twenty years — a man should fall down one of the awful chasms, thick ropes are fastened round the body and under the arms of the deaf and dumb man, and he is then lowered into the gulf. He has been taught to bring up whatever he finds, and having seized the body, he is raised up with it in his arms, apparently as unconscious as a machine. As a reward for his service he receives a little meat, of which he is very fond, but which the other inhabitants of the valley rarely taste, as they live chiefly on cheese and curds. When he gets any food that pleases him, he expresses his joy by hideous bursts of laughter; and the mirth of this wretched

creature excites melancholy feelings in those who witness it. A smile upon his emaciated countenance is a frightful convulsion.

The album in which travellers are accustomed to inscribe their poetic effusions is so full of absurdities that I presume few will now venture to add to the number. It is curious to see thus assembled together the names of the poets and scholars of all countries, but it is not certainly in their impromptus that any trace of their talents is discoverable. A proof that the sublime scenery of nature is not always a source of inspiration.

Madame de Staël, who was so bold in her literary conceptions and in her political conduct, betrayed all the weakness of a woman when she had to face physical danger or encounter fatigue. She is said to have stayed at the inn of Chamouny while her friends ascended the glaciers, observing that she could hear from them all that could be learnt from description, and that her imagination would supply the rest. Certainly nothing short of her imagination could conceive the awful magnificence of such a scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

Departure from Geneva for Paris. — We Go to Malmaison. — Her Majesty's Departure for Navarre. — A Messenger is Sent for Us Four Days after in a Berline with Six Horses. — Our Arrival at Navarre. — Gracious Reception Given Us by the Empress. — Mdlle. Avrillon and Madame d'Audenarde. — My Awkwardness and Embarrassment at Court. — The Bishop of Evreux. — The Comtesse d' Arberg. — Mesdames de Rémusat, de Ségur, de Colbert, de Mackau, de Vieil-Castel. — MM. de Baral, de Beaumont, de Monaco, de Turpin, etc.

WE at length left Geneva on our return to Paris. When, from the top of a mountain of Jura, I looked back for the last time upon that city where I had passed so many happy moments, I experienced a feeling of bitter regret, — a presentiment of what I was doomed afterwards to suffer. During the whole of our journey nothing could banish this emotion from my mind; and, though consoled by the presence of my family, I could not be brought to forget the agreeable time I had passed in a place which I ardently

wish to see again, but to which I have probably bidden an eternal adieu.

After a few days' repose we proposed to pay a visit to the Empress, who was at Malmaison. She received us with still greater affability than at Geneva, and expressed her earnest wish that we should pass a few months with her at Navarre, whither she was about to proceed. It was now the end of November, and, notwithstanding the attractions which Paris held out to me, I pressed my mother to accept the invitation. It was, therefore, agreed that Her Majesty should send for us as soon as she was settled in her new residence. She told us that there was no occasion to go to any expense for our Court dresses, for she had ordered a sort of uniform to be worn, so that all the ladies dressed alike. The dress was a robe of deep-green, no matter of what stuff, the colour alone was indispensable. We therefore busied ourselves in making very plain dresses, and I waited with impatience for the moment when I should again see this Princess, who knew how to charm every person who approached her; and who, like a beneficent fairy, assuaged all sorrows.

On the 4th of December, a berline, with the Imperial arms arrived, drawn by six horses, and having an outrider before, another behind, and two footmen on the box. The Empress had carried her attentions so far as to send one of her principal *femmes de*

*chambre** for us, and to make us a little acquainted beforehand with the manner of living at Navarre. I could scarcely trust my eyes when I looked upon this brilliant equipage ; and I, who had been used to the large, heavy, and filthy diligences common to that period, rejoiced like a child at travelling in such state. How great was my joy on stepping into this beautiful carriage ! We were hurried along with a rapidity which astounded me, and lost not a minute in changing horses, which a courier sent forward ordered to be prepared for us. We reached Mantesy in three hours and a half, and found an excellent dinner prepared for us. I was so anxious to see the Empress that I could hardly find patience to wait to the end of the course. At last, at eight o'clock, we entered the long avenue leading to the palace ; it was well lighted. The nearer I approached, the more did my joy give place to a kind of fear which I could not surmount.

Never having been at Court, and a stranger to its manners, and above all to the dissimulation which I was told formed the basis of every one's conduct there, I could not repress an emotion which I felt arising in my breast, and which became more and more painful. It was not occasioned by any dread of the Empress ; she was too good ! but the ladies of the Court, the

* Mdle. Avrillon. Her manners shewed that she often approached Her Majesty's person. No one could display more obliging conduct than this lady, who was entirely devoted to the Empress.

chamberlains — what would they say of my embarrassment? I questioned Mdlle. Avrillon respecting the persons about Her Majesty, and disclosed to her the fear I was under of being guilty of some awkwardness. Neither her kind assurance, nor the self-possession of my mother could restore my confidence; and I now dreaded the interview as much as I before desired it. At length, the carriage stopped, and a number of footmen hastened to assist us in alighting, and in removing our trunks and boxes. We were then shewn to our apartments where we found the supper-table covered.

Mdlle. Avrillon assured us that the Empress would not see us till the next day, as Her Majesty would be desirous that we should enjoy some repose after the fatigue of our journey. She added that she would go and give the Empress notice of our arrival, and desired me to be quite easy on the score of my reception, which she was sure would not fail to be agreeable. I breathed again at the thought of having one whole night left me to prepare for my presentation.

When I waited on the Empress at Malmaison I laboured under no fear of that kind, because there the drawing-room was so full of company that no one could notice me among the multitude; besides, I saw only one of those crowded circles to which I had been accustomed. But I considered that at a distance from Paris people look out for something to amuse

them ; and I thought that one so unacquainted with fashion as myself would afford a fine butt for the wit of the courtiers, the whole set of whom appeared to my imagination no better than impertinent scoffers.

In the midst of these consoling reflections I heard a knock at our door, and immediately afterwards Madame d' Audenarde entered, who asked how it happened that we were sitting there so much at our ease when Her Majesty was waiting for us. At these words I scarcely knew what to think ; I did all I could to put off the dreaded moment, and the more I tried the worse I succeeded in excusing myself. Of course, my scruples were easily answered, and I was forced to go and put on the green dress, which at that moment appeared to me frightfully ugly. Madame d' Audenarde, with great good nature, endeavoured to dissipate what she called my terrors, assuring me that I should find the company in the salon at Navarre no less indulgent than elsewhere ; and of the justness of her observation I had a proof before my eyes, but yet I could not bring myself to believe that all were like Madame d' Audenarde. I spent as much time as I could at my toilet ; and when I saw that I must at last go, my feet would scarcely support me. Madame d' Audenarde preceded us, but my confusion did not allow me to see her natural and easy manner.

We passed through an antechamber full of foot-

men. There were thirty of them; but to me they seemed not fewer than two hundred. We then entered a salon where there were four *valets de chambre*, with embroidered dresses, and swords at their side; and, lastly, into a room where stood the usher, who announced the company to Her Majesty. Afraid of appearing too haughty I made obeisance upon obeisance, from the time I entered the first antechamber until we stopped at the door, where Madame d'Audenarde said :

“Come, take courage; this is the gallery in which the Empress is.”

However singular it may appear, it is not the less true that in a moment all my fears left me, and the name of the Empress acted like a talisman in dissipating my terrors. I now followed my mother with confidence. I made my three curtsies, very awkwardly, I suppose, but the benevolence which appeared on the countenances of all around, the natural consequence of the goodness of the Sovereign, soon made me feel perfectly at ease.

When I entered the salon Her Majesty was playing at trictrac with the Bishop of Evreux, for whom she justly felt great respect. He had the management of the greater part of the funds which she set apart for charitable purposes. He was well fitted for such service by his well-known beneficence and unostentatious piety. There was no austerity in the man-

ners of this reverend old man ; he was of a cheerful disposition, and was obliging to the young, by whom he was adored. He fulfilled with great strictness all the painful duties of his episcopal office ; and he was often seen conversing with the dying poor, carrying them whatever remedies might be needful, and, when he heard the confession of some heavy sin, whispering words of consolation, which calmed the cruel torments of remorse, and revived the hope of pardon in their withered, desponding hearts.

His presence never interrupted the diversions of the young people met together at Navarre, and his conversation and example often prompted to honourable conduct. All who desired to meet with the approbation of so good a man became better by that ambition. This portrait is flattering, but its correctness will be acknowledged by all who have had the happiness of frequently seeing the original.

After being presented to the Empress, we were introduced to Madame la Comtesse d'Arberg. The fine and noble figure of this lady would have struck awe into those who approached her, had not her dignity been tempered by an expression of mildness and benevolence.

At the period of the divorce she was unwilling to leave Josephine, with whom she had been Dame du Palais. The Emperor, aware of the great attachment she felt for her mistress, and admiring the

nobleness of her sentiments and behaviour, named her Lady of Honour in the place of Madame de la Rochefoucauld.* Madame d'Arberg possessed, he well knew, sufficient energy of character to resist the excessive expenses which the Empress's charity led her into. By her place she possessed entire authority over the household; and it is owing to the great regularity which she established, that the Empress was enabled to continue her charities, without diminishing that style of splendour in which

* After the divorce Madame la Comtesse de la Rochefoucauld, who was Lady of Honour to Josephine, lost no time in applying to the Emperor to be appointed to the same situation under Marie Louise as that in which she had served the divorced Empress, by whom she had been loaded with favours. Napoleon, whose noble soul revolted at such an instance of ingratitude, deprived Madame de la Rochefoucauld of her place, and immediately appointed Madame la Comtesse d'Arberg in her stead. The following letter, written by Josephine to Madame de la Rochefoucauld, affords a testimony of the attachment which I have said the Empress felt for that lady:

“ TO MADAME DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

“ We leave here at four o'clock, and you may, therefore, expect us to breakfast at ten. I hasten to send you this note that you may not be taken by surprise. You know the Emperor's activity and punctuality, and both seem to increase with time. An hour ago I was ignorant of our departure. We were at the card-table. ‘Get ready, madame,’ said he to me, ‘to step into your carriage at midnight.’ ‘But it is already past nine o'clock.’ ‘True; you must have time for your toilet. We will set out then at two o'clock.’ ‘Where are we going?’ ‘To Bayonne.’ ‘No further? But my pensioners; I must settle their monthly allowance.’ ‘An hour to devote to the unfortunate, madame; how can I refuse you that? Take another to write to your dear friends; you will not forget Madame de la Rochefoucauld.’ Adieu, my dear friend, I must now devote a few minutes to repose. I shall be carried sleeping to my travelling carriage, and shall not open my eyes again until I wake in your arms and greet you with a sincere embrace.”

she delighted, and which she would have felt much pain to renounce. Far from being offended with the remonstrances of her *grande maîtresse* (for thus she called Madame d'Arberg) she always acknowledged her to be in the right, and yielded, with a charming grace, to her just observations. Madame d'Arberg was no longer in the bloom of youth, but yet few looked better than she did.

She was the mother of Madame Mouton, Comtesse de Lobau, who had lately been confined in childbirth. When Her Majesty was informed of that event, some one inconsiderately asked (of course not thinking that Madame d'Arberg was within hearing), whether Madame Mouton had been brought to bed of a Merino. "No, monsieur," replied Madame d'Arberg, "I have the happiness to be the grandmother of a fine girl;" and, immediately after, she turned the discourse to another subject, to relieve the confusion of the unlucky wit.

A gentleman was one day reading in her presence a work, in which there occurred some allusion of the amours of the celebrated Alfieri and the Countess of Albany, Madame d'Arberg's sister. He hesitated, and endeavoured to pass a few lines, but became unintelligible from the difficulty of preserving the connection of the story. "Go on, sir, boldly," said she to him, smiling, "for I suppose *I am there*."

These two anecdotes will suffice to shew the good-

nature of Madame d' Arberg, and how far her disposition was from partaking of any of that severity and bitterness with which she has been reproached. I always found her ready to excuse and protect others.

Madame d' Arberg, Lady of Honour ; Mesdames de Rémusat, de Ségur, de Colbert, de Mackau, de Vieil-Castel, de Sérent, ladies of the household ; Madame Gazani, reader ; M. de Beaumont, gentleman usher ; M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours, first almoner ; M. Henri de Monaco, first equerry ; MM. de Turpin, Vieil-Castel, and Montholon, chamberlains ; MM. Portalès and Guित्रy, equerries, composed the society of Navarre, to which are to be added, Mdle. Louise de Castellane,* my mother, and myself.

* The Empress had been on terms of close intimacy with this young lady's mother, who died at variance with her family, absolutely ruined in circumstances, and leaving three daughters behind. Her Majesty placed two of them at the school of Madame Campan, for whom she entertained a great regard. She took upon herself all the expenses of their education, and when it was completed she placed near her person Mdle. Louise, the young lady I have just mentioned. Several of Her Majesty's nieces were also at the establishment of Madame Campan, who frequently received letters from Josephine, relative to any failing she might have discovered in those young ladies. The following copy of one was handed to me by the person who is in possession of the original.

“TO MADAME CAMPAN, AT SAINT-GERMAIN.

“In sending my niece back to you, dear Madame Campan, I request you to receive my thanks and my reproaches ; the former for your friendly attentions to the child, and the excellent education you are giving her ; the latter for the defects your penetration will not have failed to notice, but which your indulgence has overlooked in her. This young girl is of a gentle but cold disposition ; well instructed, but haughty ; witty, but devoid of understanding ; she fails to please, and is indifferent about it. She imagines that the fame of her uncle and the

MM. Horeau, the physician of the establishment, and Deschamps, the private secretary of Josephine, came to spend their evenings in the salon; but they were waited upon in their own apartments, and only dined with the Empress when they were specially invited.

This circle was sufficiently cheerful to give charms to the conversation; added to which, none was better calculated than the Empress to enliven it by her spirited relation of certain anecdotes connected with

bravery of her father supply the want of everything else. Let her know, in a very abrupt and unceremonious way, that those qualities in them are nothing to her. We live in times when every one is the artificer of his own fortune; and those who serve the State in the highest rank of society are entitled to no other advantage or privilege than that of being more amiable and more useful than the rest of the community. Thus alone can envy be made to overlook their superiority. My dear Madame Campan should not have allowed my niece to be ignorant of this truth, and should be constantly repeating it, in my name. I desire that they may treat, as their equals, all their companions, the greater part of whom are at least of as much consequence as herself, and whose only defect is that they were not born of more talented or more fortunate parents."

Madame Campan has been severely criticized concerning her mode of education; great pains have been taken to collect some scattered adventures, the heroines of which had been reared by that celebrated woman, in order to prove that all the calumnies heaped upon her establishment and herself were founded in truth. As she had a great number of boarders at her house, it might have been thought quite natural that some of them should have failed to adhere to the principles in which they had been brought up; since it unfortunately happens that the most watchful tenderness of a mother having an only daughter fails in the object of guarding her from the consequences of her frivolous and giddy attachments. Madame Campan was in the enjoyment of Court favour; she was visited by Princesses and Queens; this was enough to excite a feeling of animosity against her, and to give rise to a variety of equally absurd and uncharitable reports. I have had no direct intercourse with Madame Campan, but I was on terms of intimacy with many of her

her singular destiny, some of which I shall hereafter notice. I never saw her give the least indication of ill humour during the five months of my residing with her; and it will be seen, by the description of our daily engagements, that I passed a great part of the time by her side. This evenness of temper, which it would be difficult to find in a private individual, is the distinguishing feature in the character of the fascinating woman who possessed so many brilliant qualities.

pupils, who have acted as conspicuous a part in the world by the undeviating correctness of their conduct as by their knowledge and accomplishments. I am acquainted with a boarding-school which well deserves to supply the place of the establishment at Saint-Germain; the wit and elegant manners of the mistress, the principles she instils into her pupils, the admirable appearance and excellent situation of the house, the merits of the professors, contribute to raise this boarding-school above every other in Paris. When I name M. Grenier for drawing, M. Charles Rhein for the pianoforte, M. Foignet for the harp, M. Sor for the guitar, M. Lefort for whatever relates to instruction in general, and M. Ferdinand for dancing, I am contributing to secure the best education to the young ladies who may be confided to the care of Madame Migneron, of the Rue de Valois in the Faubourg du Roule. I think I am rendering an essential service to mothers of families when I point out to their notice this extensive establishment. I would as readily name a better one if I were acquainted with any.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Day at Navarre. — Habits of the Empress. — Details Concerning the Persons of Her Household. — An Inhabitant of Evreux is Invited to Dinner. — Strange Anecdote. — The Glass of Hot Water. — My Awkwardness at Table. — Some of the Household Come to Take Share of My Supper in My Own Apartment. — The Empress Dismisses Her Escort. — The Emperor Writes to Madame d'Arberg. — Comte de Chambaudoin.

OUR daily occupations were generally as follows: we attended every Sunday the Mass performed in the chapel of the palace by a chaplain in ordinary; M. de Barral officiated on festivals. We sat down to breakfast at ten o'clock, and were expected to be in the saloon before Her Majesty, who was extremely punctual, being, no doubt, of opinion, with Louis XVIII., that punctuality is the politeness of Kings.* Her Majesty instantly repaired to the dining-room; if any one failed to come down at the appointed hour, a headache was pleaded in excuse, and breakfast was taken up to the absent person's apartment.

* That pleasing authoress, Madame de Souza, made use of a pretty expression, which was considered as the companion of this remark. She said that cleanliness was the elegance of the poor. The idea is as just as it is well expressed.

The breakfast, as well as the dinner, only consisted of one course, with the exception of the dessert, which formed the second course; the soup, the first dishes, the roast meat, and the dainties, were all served up at the same time. There were, besides, large sideboards covered with pastry, jellies, etc. A footman stood in attendance behind each chair; four stewards, a butler, and two upper servants, handed round the different dishes on the table, and every kind of wine. On rising from table, the footman in attendance presented a blue goblet with a glass of lukewarm water to rinse the mouth.

An inhabitant of Evreux, who was invited to dine, supposed it was the custom to drink off the water, and did so without hesitation; it made him so ill that he was under the necessity of immediately quitting the room. This blunder gave rise to much merriment.

My fear of exposing myself by some awkward act made me determine not to partake of anything at the table. I accordingly abstained from eating during the first days of my arrival at Navarre; Madame d'Arberg perceived it, and the friendly interest she took in me led her to ask if I wanted to starve myself. I acknowledged to her that I preferred eating dry bread in my own room rather than expose myself to any breach of manners. She laughed at such childish timidity, and mentioned it at the table next day to Her Majesty, who ordered that a fowl and some

Malaga wine should be taken every night to my apartment, as she could not allow me to put up with such dry fare in her own house.

The ladies who occupied the apartments adjoining mine took pleasure in coming to partake of my supper, which I was thus prevented from eating to my heart's content, and I had thenceforward to call for an increased portion. In order to avoid keeping the footman up at late hours, MM. de Portalès and de Turpin waited upon us and lent us their private plate.

At the expiration of a week, after having attentively examined the behaviour of the company at table, their manner of drinking, etc., I found myself as great an adept as my neighbours, and resolved that I should dine as they did. Nevertheless, we continued to enjoy our fowl at night, and retired, in consequence, at a very late hour. These suppers were kept up until we left for Malmaison, where our apartments were too near the Empress to allow of our keeping up those nightly *rendezvous*, which would have disturbed her rest.

The Empress had behind her at table two valets, a Basque running footman, a chasseur, and a chief steward. The service was generally of plate; at dessert, however, it was of porcelain, painted with fruits and flowers. On days of ceremony a magnificent service of Sèvres porcelain made its appearance; it had been presented by the Emperor subsequently to his divorce; the golden plateau was a gift from the

City of Paris on the day of the coronation, as well as a toilet and tea-table, which Her Majesty kept at Malmaison. She named the two persons who were to sit near her ; the Viceroy and the Queen of Holland did the same when they were on a visit, as well as Madame d'Arberg. The rest of the company placed themselves as they thought proper.

Breakfast generally lasted three-quarters of an hour. Every one then retired to the gallery, which was used as a salon. The Empress worked at tapestry, the ladies at various objects, and a chamberlain on duty read the novels, travels, and memoirs that made their appearance. It was then that I became acquainted for the first time with the "Itinerary" of M. de Châteaubriand, which created so strong an interest that it was instantly taken up and read a second time. When the weather was favourable, the company took a ride. At two o'clock three carriages and four drove us to the beautiful forest of Evreux or to the vicinity of that town. Her Majesty always named Madame d'Arberg, a Lady of Honour, and a visitor, to accompany her. The remainder of the household seated themselves indiscriminately in the other two carriages. The equerry on duty rode in full uniform at the door on the right hand of the Empress, an officer of cuirassiers at the other door, and a picket of that corps followed the calash. Feeling annoyed at this etiquette, Her Majesty took upon herself to suppress it; she

allowed the equerry and officer to wait upon her in a frock coat, and directed that the escort should only attend her on days of ceremony.

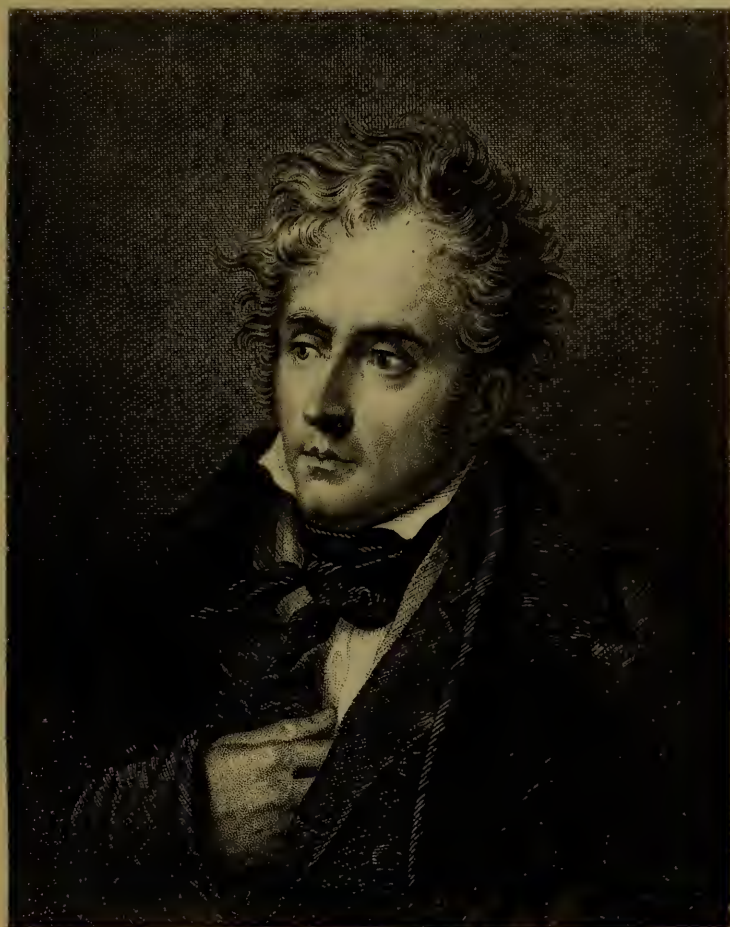
The Emperor was informed of it, and he wrote a severe letter to Madame d' Arberg, saying that it must never be forgotten that the Empress and Queen had been *crowned*; everything should be done at a distance from the Tuileries as if she were still in that palace. He had forgotten the pages when he formed the establishment of her household, but he would now appoint twelve persons to that duty (he kept his word a few months afterwards); he would not allow of any frock coats—it was shewing a great want of respect for Her Majesty. It became necessary, therefore, to resume the embroidered dress, the sword, and hat with feathers—a restraint which the gentlemen concerned found extremely irksome to them.*

The ride was generally over at four o'clock, and we returned to our respective apartments until the hour of six, when we repaired to dinner, which lasted an hour. It was almost invariably attended by some visitors from Evreux, such as the Prefect, the mayor, the commandant of the gendarmerie, the colonel of the regiment of cuirassiers which did garrison duty in that town for the purpose of providing an

* The Empress had fixed upon a particular uniform, which they wore in the evening. It consisted of a green coat with black velvet collar and facings, and a stripe of gold embroidery. This was less showy and less expensive than the costumes of the equeries and chamberlains.

Châteaubriand.

Photo-etching after engraving by Hopgood.



escort and several ladies. M. Dupont de l'Eure, who was not at that time so strenuous an opponent of people of rank as he is at the present day, was constantly on a visit at Navarre, courted a smile or a look from the Sovereign, and affected an unbounded attachment to the Emperor's *absolute* power. The Empress said that this was not always the case, and she greatly enjoyed the restraint which she supposed him to be under. He has now returned to his former opinions. He made a greater impression on me than the rest, because he wore a small black silk cloak ;* this did not appear in good keeping with his grand cross of the Legion of Honour, set in diamonds, a gift from Her Majesty. He often sat down to cards with her, and she felt great delight in listening to his witty conversation. This was not the case of the Prefect, M. de Chambaudoin, whose *simplicity* was proverbial amongst us. I shall have occasion to quote an instance of it.

After dinner, Her Majesty named those with whom she wished to play at backgammon, piquet, or casino. It was not customary to play for money when strangers were of the party. When the Empress played her game of piquet with any person of her household the stakes were three francs for each counter. A round game was sometimes played, in which she condescended to join ; she then allowed any stake that was

* I believe he held the rank of Imperial Solicitor.

proposed, because she held the bank in her hands. Her great delight was to win from M. Pierlot, the Comptroller of her household, who was a wretched player, and who took no pains to conceal his bad temper, which Josephine greatly enjoyed, and which, consequently, afforded amusement to all the company. Madame d'Arberg also named the persons who were to play with her; the remainder of the card-parties were made up at random. The younger members of the company generally withdrew to the adjoining salon, containing a pianoforte and a harp, and indulged in music or in dancing. We sometimes were so boisterous, and broke out into such immoderate fits of laughter, that Madame d'Arberg wanted to send us word that we should restrain our noisy mirth, but Josephine would not allow it, and assured her that our unrestrained joy had the effect of cheering her spirits and amusing her. At eleven o'clock we removed to a small salon, where a tea-table was laid. After this collation the visitors withdrew; the Empress remained another hour in conversation with us. This colloquial intercourse afforded the best opportunity of judging of the extent of her wit, and of the goodness of her heart; she joined in it in the most unreserved manner. At times she suddenly stopped short in the midst of an interesting narrative, saying that everything she told us was repeated to the Emperor, a circumstance which was exceedingly pain-

ful to her feelings. In fact, he was informed of every word of these conversations.*

At midnight she withdrew to her apartment, and we retired to our rooms, where we still kept up our frolicsome mirth.

* Her suspicions did not alight upon any one of the society in particular; certain it is, however, that some person was directed to act as a spy over her actions. I do not believe that she ever discovered who was the informer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Palace of Navarre Before and After the Revolution. — Our Establishment at that Palace. — We Play Enigmatic Games. — Envy and Capriciousness of the Comedians. — The Town of Evreux Invites the Household of the Empress to a Ball. — Madame de Rémusat — Anecdotes Related by the Empress Respecting the Maréchale Lefebvre. — Story of the Loss of a Large Diamond.

It was said that Navarre was, before the Revolution, the most delightful spot imaginable. Its immense park was surrounded and overlooked by the fine forest of Evreux ; beautiful cascades were formed by fine clear water running in canals ; part of it had received a meandering direction for the purpose of producing a charming river in the private park called *l'Île d'Amour*. A temple of a splendid but rather Gothic architecture presented elegant internal decorations. Enormous pillars of blue crystal, in which a countless number of lights were introduced, exhibited the most fanciful and pleasing light ; paintings in fresco of the most celebrated masters and splendid statues completed the

illusion, and rendered that spot worthy of the god to whom it was dedicated.

The Empress had to incur a heavy expense in its repairs. It had suffered, like every other place, from revolutionary inroads. Traces of its ravages were to be seen in all directions; and after the lapse of fifty years this temple was left a mere ruin. Its destruction had been accelerated by means far more effectual than the progress of time. When I saw it, it had undergone repair, but no idea could be formed of its charms without referring to the tradition of its first origin.

Her Majesty's attention was chiefly directed to the object of removing the impediments to the unobstructed flowing of the water, which, having been neglected, had become stagnant, and occasioned autumnal fevers. At the time I speak of, the water was so perfectly clear that it was necessary to stir it for the purpose of fishing.

A long and magnificent avenue led to what was called *the palace*, which, properly speaking, was nothing more than a hunting pavilion, far too confined for the Empress, whose apartment was small and incomplete; the hall of the guards was alone suitable to a princely habitation. It received the light from a large cupola of the same elevation as the palace. The apartments which we occupied opened into the corridor surrounding this cupola; owing to their dis-

tribution they were exceedingly uncomfortable and cold, having no antechamber to separate them from the corridor.

The footmen were huddled together in a kind of loft; an inconvenience which did not prevent Josephine from ascending to it when any one was confined by illness. She never failed to make her appearance whenever a fellow creature was in bodily pain, and never quitted the bedside of the patient without leaving behind her some token of her generosity.

Her Majesty ordered an augmentation to the stables; they were surrounded by infectious marshes, the unhealthiness of which was removed by the care she bestowed to the subject; in so doing she conferred a benefit upon the surrounding country.

We took it one day into our heads to play enigmatic games. The Empress ordered her dresses to be placed at our disposal; we were, therefore, provided with splendid costumes; this very splendour was probably the cause of our soon feeling a disrelish for this kind of amusement, which unquestionably derives its chief attraction from the oddness and ridiculous cut of an extemporary and unexpected garb.

We no sooner had free access to feathers, flowers, cashmere shawls, and dresses covered with gold, than we aimed at embellishments in our attire; pretensions and coquettishness were substituted for mirth; every one ambitioned to act the principal part in the

performance, which had been prepared long beforehand, and which exclusively engrossed our attention since the morning; vexation was felt at being disappointed; and, had we continued, I am confident that we should have exhibited all those petty squabbles which break up the harmony of performers. Fortunately for us, Madame d'Arberg discovered that we damaged many fine dresses; the waiting-maids complained, and the permission was retracted, a circumstance which alone prevented our falling out with each other. Wounded self-love has often disturbed the peace of kingdoms; what wonder, then, if it should have spread disunion in a circle of women?

The town of Evreux invited the household of the Empress to a ball, which took place at the theatre.

We all accepted the invitation, with the exception of Her Majesty; Madame d'Arberg and my mother remained to play cards with her. The Empress insisted that the young ladies should be well dressed; she sent for Mdles. de Mackau, de Castellane, and myself, in order to examine our dresses; as the weather was intensely cold, she lent us magnificent velvet pelisses, lined with furs of the most costly description.

When I found myself in a carriage drawn by six horses, in a box decorated with red velvet, invited to dance with the first authorities of the town, it only required an effort of imagination to make me con-

sider myself a personage of some importance; fortunately for me I recollected my scanty fortune, and the humble hack in which I was wont to ride; my weak intellect, being reminded of the truth by the painful comparison, was no longer bewildered by those outward signs of transitory grandeur.

The life we led at Navarre was very congenial to my feelings; we generally enjoyed ourselves to such a degree that we felt no desire to quit this place. Nevertheless, the *forms of Court* often crept into our retirement. Petty intrigues and jealousies had their free range; an additional smile bestowed by Her Majesty had the effect of distorting many a countenance; but the gracious air of command was soon resumed, until a fresh favour brought on the return of a clouded aspect. A *camellia*, at that time a very scarce flower, which was given to me by Josephine, brought upon me the enmity of a person who has ever since retained that feeling. She is no longer of this world; I must, therefore, suppress all allusion to this trivial occurrence which had a great influence over my fate at a later period, since that lady, who had no rivalship to fear, had felt such an apprehension of me as to endeavour to alienate Josephine's friendly sentiments; an attempt in which she, unhappily, succeeded.

Many persons of that society have remained strangers to the feelings of envy; amongst these

was Madame de Rémusat, whose loss was so universally deplored. To a superior mind, and the most elevated ideas (proofs of which have been afforded by her remarkable work),* she united a noble and generous heart: if any favour was to be asked of Her Majesty, Madame de Rémusat was always the person applied to. No doubt was entertained of her taking upon herself to present the petition of any one in distress, and warmly pleading the cause confided to her. Her long tried attachment to Josephine gave her an influence which she exerted for the advantage of others. I have known her to obtain in the course of a week three or four favours, which others had declined to solicit of the Empress.

“There is no danger,” she said, “of annoying or importuning Josephine when we enable her to relieve the distressed; I have, therefore, no merit in applying to her.”

In this manner she sought to lessen the merit of what she did. A sense of gratitude has already inspired the idea of giving publicity to her good actions; and she has found their just reward in the esteem of all those who were acquainted with her.

The Empress told us of the weariness to which she was a prey at the Tuileries, and of the pleasure she felt when any circumstance occurred to interrupt the fatiguing Court ceremony to which she was chained

* Essay on the Education of Women.

down. She related to us on that subject a few anecdotes concerning the Maréchale Lefebvre, who was so well known for the coarseness of her manners.

On the night of a Court circle she made her appearance loaded with diamonds, pearls, flowers, silver, gold, etc., as she said "she wished to have ornaments of all sorts on her person." M. de Beaumont, the chamberlain on duty, announced Madame la Maréchale Lefebvre. The Emperor came to receive her, and said :

"How do you do, Madame la Maréchale, Duchess of Dantzic." (A title which M. de Beaumont had forgotten.)

She turned quickly round upon the latter, with a laugh, and said, aloud :

"That's a slap at you, my lad."

The reader will readily imagine what a fund of mirth this observation occasioned, and how great was the embarrassment of M. de Beaumont, a man of the most polished good breeding and of a reserve which he deemed of importance to the dignity of his office. An immoderate fit of laughter caught the whole assembly, whose looks were riveted upon him. It was impossible, for some moments, to restore the gravity becoming a public reception; and the Emperor was the first to enjoy this strange sally.

The Maréchale went one day to visit some hôtels, with the intention of purchasing a residence. She

came to an apartment surrounded with bookcases, lined with green silk.

"What's that?" she inquired of the porter.

"Madame la Maréchale, it is a library."

"What's the good of it?"

"To hold books, madame."

"Well-a-day, what trash! My husband don't read; no more don't I; so I'll make this my fruit-room; I can't do better."

The apartment was accordingly converted to that purpose; in point of smell it was not improved by the change.

She came one day to breakfast with the Empress, who was at the Tuileries, and was surrounded by the ladies of her Court. Her Majesty found the Maréchale in an agitated state, which was not usual with her; and, with that graceful manner so natural to Josephine, she kindly inquired what was the cause of her uneasiness and distress of mind.

"Oh, madame, 't is a long story, which I have no objection to tell Your Majesty; but you must first pack off those women (the Ladies of Honour), who are looking at me, giggling all the while."

"Ladies, will you be kind enough to step into the adjoining salon," said Josephine to them, under the impression that the case in point was some family secret.

"Now then, Duchess, relate to me your troubles."

"I have n't any more troubles, madame; but you see I am still flurried all over with a misfortune that happened to me this morning."

"How is this? has your son been fighting?"

"He is not such a fool."

"The marshal, then?"

"'Tis nothing about him; I thought I had lost *my large diamond*. I was certain I had left it in my room; when I came home it was gone. I asked those who *was* there; they told me *as how* none but the scrubber of my floors was in it. He was in the salon which he was just finishing; I *makes* him come in, and I *tells* him, 'Scoundrel,' I *says*, 'you have my large diamond; I must have it because I *values* it; 'tis the first that Lefebvre gave me; come, out with it, and I sha' n't do you anything.' My lad says he has n't got it. He was a black; I could n't see if he blushed; but I still *says* to him that I want my large diamond; and I *orders* him to empty his pockets. 'Nothing in my hands, nothing in my pockets,' *says* he. 'Well then, scoundrel, strip.' He hesitates; but I am not to be led in this manner, not I, indeed. 'Strip, you rogue; stark naked, I desire, or I *calls* my *servants* to kill you.' At last he strips as *naked as a worm*, and I found my diamond. Here it is. A fine lady, *howsomever*, would have lost it." *

* *That large diamond she valued so much* was afterwards sold by her, with many others, in order to erect a monument to the Duke of

The following trait does honour to her character, and inspires a friendly feeling for a woman who has been such a source of mirth to others far less deserving of regard. Madame de Walsh-Sérent was on duty near Her Majesty; she was suddenly startled by a slap on the shoulder, and a hoarse voice crying out to her :

“ Good morrow, *gossip*.”

Astonished at this familiar tone, to which she was so little accustomed, Madame de Sérent turned round and recognized the Maréchale.

“ Madame, I —”

“ Pooh ! pooh ! no fine speeches for me ! Come, now, don’t you know me again ? Before I was a great lady I was a plain nurse. I nursed your good man ; you *was* kind to me, and godmother to one of my babes ; how should n’t I recollect it ! Give us a hug.” *

It must be owned that there is great credit due to the woman who can thus court the renewal of an acquaintance which would be mortifying to the self-love of so many others ; and that such a good-natured feeling is far preferable to the insolent haughtiness of so many upstarts, whose impertinence more forcibly

Dantzic, who left her in circumstances as limited as they are creditable to his character. His grave is every day visited by the Duchess, who is inconsolable for the loss of her husband and of her son.

* The above language is as close a translation of the original as possible. —*Translator*.

calls to mind what they formerly were. That excellent woman proved herself a tender mother and a devoted wife; she is beloved by all her inferiors, towards whom she evinces an unwearied kindness of disposition.

CHAPTER XIX.

A New Year's Day at Navarre. — Singular Lottery. — Envy of the Ladies of the Household. — M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours. — Ill Humour of Madame Gazani. — Anecdote Respecting That Lady, Who Goes to Complain to the Emperor. — Witty Sayings of Madame de Souza. — Portrait of the Reader of the Empress. — Conduct of Josephine after Madame Gazani's Disgrace.

NEW YEAR'S DAY came to pass; the Empress announced that instead of giving new year's gifts she should have a lottery of jewels. The whole household was impatient to know what the wheel of chance, *aided* by Her Majesty, would procure for them. M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours, a very witty but absent man, did not perceive how the lots were drawn. The first was for him; it was a splendid ruby ring, surrounded with diamonds; he was delighted with it, and repeated, with laughable candour, that this happened very well, as he was at liberty to wear it, whilst he should have been puzzled with a necklace or earrings, which he should have been under the necessity of exchanging. He did not perceive that the Empress *lent her assistance* to the wheel,

until two of the Ladies of Honour had received articles similar to each other for their share ; the chamberlains pins of the same kind, etc. As Madame Gazani only held the office of reader, she could not have a present like those of the Ladies of Honour without greatly offending their pride, as they considered themselves of a far more elevated rank. With a view to soften down as much as possible the distinction she was unable to overlook in this case between ladies who were all treated alike in her society, and knowing as she did how self-love is prone to become ruffled at Court, and with what pertinacity one is apt to adhere to the prerogatives of place, the Empress gave her a beautiful bracelet of large coloured stones set in diamonds, which conveyed the name of *Josephine* to the mind. The other ladies were presented with splendid brilliants in the form of crosses.

Notwithstanding this mark of attention, which ought not to have been lost upon Madame Gazani, as it shewed her how disposed the Empress was to *forget*, she was greatly displeased at being treated differently from the rest of Her Majesty's household. For our parts, as we held no situation, we had no right to expect any gifts ; nevertheless, she presented us with some charming ones. I place the greatest value on Her Majesty's hair enclosed in a medallion which fell to my lot. Nothing could be more acceptable to me ; the medallion and chain were of fine pearls. I was

under the necessity of disposing of them, but I will never part with that portion of the present which I prized above all the rest.

Since I have adverted to Madame Gazani, I must enter into further details respecting that charming woman, who has made so much noise in the world. She was a Genoese, but the daughter of a dancer attached to the principal theatre in that city. The Emperor in one of his journeys was captivated by her lovely face, and promised to procure places for herself as well as for her husband. He made her come to Paris, where she was immediately appointed reader to the Empress, and enjoyed the Sovereign's favour. Her husband was sent as Receiver-General to Evreux.

The new favourite claimed to rank on a footing with the Ladies of Honour. Madame de La Rochefoucauld endeavoured to resist many encroachments, such as her seating herself on the same bench in the chapel of the palace. Madame Gazani went to complain to the Emperor, who gave orders that her wish should be complied with. There was no resisting his commands.

She was tall, and, although rather lean, was remarkable for her graceful deportment. She had a brown, though sometimes heated complexion; but her countenance was so captivating that any alteration in her exterior appearance would have disparaged her. She had the finest eyes I ever saw; they gave

a sudden expression to her countenance when she spoke or listened to the conversation of others.*

Madame Gazani had not pretty hands; she was careful, therefore, to wear gloves on almost every occasion. Her white teeth were constantly displayed to view by her small side-laugh, which added charms to her physiognomy. She danced well, but with rather too much pretensions; and her feet had nothing to recommend them. Without being a connoisseur in music, she sang very prettily some detached pieces which she studied beforehand. A great knowledge of the world supplied the place of wit; and if her conversation had nothing to captivate, she pleased by the softness of her voice and the pretty expressions to which her lovely mouth gave utterance.

Two months after her arrival, the Emperor, fearing that he should be domineered by a woman, as it has often happened to him, broke off all intercourse with her, and entering abruptly into Josephine's apartment:

"*Send away Madame Gazani,*" he said; "she must return to Italy."

"No, Sire, I will keep her near me; you must not throw into despair a young woman whom you have torn away from every duty. Besides, I may, perhaps, be, very shortly, as unhappy as herself" (the divorce was then whispered about in conversation). "We

* Madame de Souza, whose witty sayings are so numerous, pretended that *they resembled the clouds, as they indicated whatever the imagination most fancied.*

will mingle our tears ; she will understand me. I insist, therefore, on keeping her ; this will unquestionably be a bar to Your Majesty's ever afterwards meeting her."

" Well, do as you please ; but let me never see her again."

From that moment Josephine loaded her with kindness. Her Majesty related the above scene to my mother, and she acknowledged that she considered it as some degree of happiness in that dreadful moment of her own cruel separation to have near her a person who heard the Emperor's name mentioned with the same emotion of painful pleasure which she herself experienced in speaking of him, and who shared in her sentiments.

When I knew Madame Gazani, her heart was a prey to an attachment which ought to have effaced every recollection of her love for the Emperor ; nevertheless, she constantly spoke of him, and I think that vanity made her regret having lost the conquest of the ruler of so many Sovereigns. I do not believe she was gifted with much tenderness ; it had been blunted by the constant adulation paid to her. M. de P——, who had the advantage of a handsome countenance, the most charming temper, and a large fortune, which enabled him to give a free loose to his feeling of gallantry for the woman he deeply loved, was often extremely wretched in her

company. She was very coquettish, and, notwithstanding the mental distress she caused to the man whom she affected to be attached to, and who had sacrificed many brilliant establishments for her sake, she neglected no opportunity of displaying all her means of captivation. She pretended to make light of a grief which M. de P—— attempted to conceal, but which was evident in all his actions. He has since found a charming wife, worthy of repaying him for all the sorrows of the time I allude to.

As Madame Gazani only aimed at enslaving men, she was gentle and complaisant when she happened to be alone with women of whom she had no reason to be jealous; but if by chance she fancied for a moment that there existed the slightest intention of rivalling her, her temper suddenly changed, and she became rude and impertinent. These occasions were of rare occurrence; she was, therefore, very agreeable company.

Her husband, an excellent man, was compelled to submit to the will of the Sovereign, who, in case of resistance, would have found means of reaching him wherever he went; and he suffered from the irksomeness of his position without departing from the kindest attentions towards his wife. He trusted that this continued attachment on his part would restore him to her affections, to which his valuable qualities so justly entitled him.

CHAPTER XX.

The Viceroy at Navarre.—Presents Made by Him.—His Portrait.—Frequent Assassinations at Milan.—Means Adopted for Diminishing Their Frequency.—Queen Hortense.—Madame de Villeneuve.

THE Viceroy came frequently to Navarre, and his arrival was a source of general satisfaction. The gentlemen of our society felt confident that the conversation would be doubly interesting by the recital of the glorious engagements in which he had taken so active a share. The ladies were rejoiced at the prospect of the delightful parties he always made up in order to please them, and of a variety of small presents offered by him with a grace which greatly enhanced their value.

It was then the custom to wear a *charivari*. Prince Eugène made his appearance with a provision of those pretty trifles, which he distributed at the billiard-table and at cards. Wishing to escape the thanks of the company, he invariably contrived to lose, so that the winner secured a wished-for toy, and last, not least, a small triumph of self-love, to which no woman is insensible.

It is impossible to display greater amiability, instruction, or good-nature than the Viceroy, in his intercourse with society; he took as much pains to win general favour as a private individual might have done, who aimed at courting applause. A sworn enemy to etiquette, he endeavoured, as much as possible, to fly from it, and forbade the ushers to announce him in order to spare us the trouble of rising as often as he came in.

“It is quite enough,” he said, “that I should be compelled to submit to all the painful consequences of authority when I am at Milan; let me, at least, be allowed to enjoy myself here. *The kingly task is a severe one indeed when we have not been trained to it.*” I have seen him at Malmaison, in a dreadful shower of rain, preferring to pass through the garden on his way to the gallery rather than submit to that announcement of his name, for which he felt so much reluctance.

His handsome and soft countenance became wonderfully animated when he spoke of his campaigns. He had a dignified and elegant deportment, and his whole person would have been faultless were it not for a wretched set of teeth, which completely disfigured him. He never came without performing a multitude of charitable acts; every countenance, therefore, was beaming with delight at beholding him. Josephine noticed this circumstance with a mother’s pride. He

was unacquainted with music, but he sang *il buffo* in a pleasing manner; he possessed the instinct and taste of that art. After hearing once or twice the part he was to perform in a duet or a trio, it became quite familiar to him, and it never escaped his memory. No one ever displayed more filial or paternal tenderness.* He never could refrain from shedding tears when he alluded to the period of his mother's divorce, which he termed the *most dreadful moment of his life*.

The Viceroy always wore about him the portraits of his children and of the Vice-Queen, painted by Isabey, and suspended from a watch-chain. They formed a collection of beautiful countenances.

He related to us that when he was appointed Viceroy, not a day passed at Milan without the occurrence of some assassination. The authors of these atrocious acts of revenge, which were considered as mere trifles, were seldom prosecuted. Each powerful family had hired assassins in their employ, who perpetrated the most appalling crimes. Many wise laws were laid down by the Viceroy, such as a general prohibition, under pain of imprisonment and of a very

*It is said that he had several mistresses, but he so effectually concealed his intrigues that the Vice-Queen never had an opportunity of discovering them. He often declared that he would have sacrificed every woman in the world for the one whom he cherished above all others, and whose admirable conduct and good qualities afforded him such unalloyed happiness.

heavy fine, either to carry, purchase, or sell any other than clasped knives. When an assassin happened to be arrested, he always pretended to act under the influence of the moment, and without premeditation. He could no longer urge this excuse if he had to open the knife for the purpose of committing the deed. People of doubtful character were frequently searched in the open streets.

The Viceroy acquired a still more elevated glory than that which he had been accustomed to reap on the field of battle, — the glory of diminishing the frequency of those frightful accidents which, by degrees, became as rare at Milan as in any other country. His just and benevolent administration secured to him the warm affections of a people who are seldom much attached to their Sovereigns. His charming and gentle wife appeared in the light of an angel entrusted to watch over the happiness of one whose attention was wholly bent upon securing that of others. The admirable conduct of the Vice-Queen has contributed as much to her fame as her unparalleled beauty.

When Prince Eugène was at Navarre, no public reading took place. In fine weather the company went to fish in the sheets of water of the delightful garden attached to the palace. The lady who caught the greatest number of fish, and whose booty weighed *heaviest*, received a prize from the Viceroy, and

another from each person of the company. On our return to the palace we sent our booty to the cooks, with orders to have it immediately fried. They always murmured at being disturbed from their work, in order to attend to the cooking of some wretched fish which they would hardly have placed before the kitchen-maids, but His Imperial Highness was so delighted with such extempore repasts that they were renewed every day at the hour of four, and we all agreed in finding our fish far preferable to the choicest dishes of Her Majesty's dinner; our repast was, at all events, infinitely more cheerful than that meal.

When the rain confined us within doors, the billiard-table was the place of resort, and, as I have already mentioned, trifling toys were the winner's reward. The men were excluded from the competition. Music was always performed at night, and the Viceroy took part in it.

The Queen of Holland was on a visit at the palace when he joined us, but as it did not afford sufficient accommodation for every one, many ladies of the household had to give up their apartments, and we slept three or four in the same room. The Queen was less cheerful than her brother, a circumstance to be ascribed, I believe, to her extremely debilitated state of health. When she came, the dress previously allowed was laid aside; the men resumed their places

about the Court, and we had to appear in full dress as if to attend a ball. The presence of the Queen never failed to occasion some restraint, because she was accompanied by ladies who always adhered to Court forms, and would have deemed it derogatory to their dignity to act otherwise. We must except from the number Madame de Villeneuve, whose gentleness and amiability of disposition were in perfect harmony with her lovely countenance.

When the Queen was free from pain, she sang romances with considerable animation, and condescended to point out to us the manner of singing them. I have been less in the habit of meeting her than her brother, as she was mostly confined to her apartment, and had to go through a course of medicine, which she could not depart from without augmenting her sufferings.

CHAPTER XXI.

Grand Dinner at the Mayor of Evreux. — Birth of the King of Rome. — General Rejoicing in Paris. — The Viceroy Relates What He Had Seen at the Emperor's Palace. — Affected Airs of the Queen of Naples and of Princesse Pauline. — A Page Arrives from the Emperor. — Note from Napoleon. — Generosity of the Empress. — Departure of the Viceroy. — The Empress Gives a Fête. — Adventure of M. de Clermont-Tonnerre.

THE whole household was engaged to a dinner given by the Mayor of Evreux, and repaired to the invitation, leaving, as usual, Madame d'Arberg with Her Majesty, whom she never quitted.

In the midst of a splendid repast, there entered an *employé* of the prefecture, bringing a letter for the mayor; his countenance sparkled with delight, and he exclaimed, at the very threshold of the apartment, "*The King of Rome is born!*" This was on the 20th of March, 1811.

It is beyond my power adequately to express the sensation created by these words upon the minds of the guests, who, hastily rising from their seats, and approaching the bearer of this important news, ques-

tioned him upon the event, and upon the effect it had produced in Paris.

Whilst the mayor hurried off to attend to the instructions he had just received, M. Portalès issued his orders for the carriages to be got in readiness to return immediately to Navarre, to which place the prefect had dispatched a courier. No time was lost in preparing the equipages; nevertheless, when we took our departure the town was already illuminated, the bonfires were lighted, the guns were firing, and the bells ringing to communicate far and near that the wishes of France had been fulfilled.

It is an undoubted fact that the most opposite opinions gave way at that time to the necessity felt of seeing an heir to the man, who, by means of his victorious sword, had raised the Crown of France from the torrent of blood which covered it. His splendid triumphs had restored to Frenchmen that rank among nations which they had lost owing to the frightful crimes perpetrated by a part of the population. By dint of victories the errors in which the majority had taken so small a share had been nearly expiated. If the Emperor failed to secure the affections of all, he was at least entitled to gratitude for having repaired so much mischief, for having restored a code of laws, and reëstablished a religious worship which held out the flattering prospect of a complete reconciliation with a God who had

so often been insulted by odious bacchanalia and disgraceful prostitutions of holy ceremonies. The emigrants had returned in great numbers when they saw Napoleon at the head of the Government. They not only enjoyed the happiness of revisiting their fine native land, which they loved the more since they had had an opportunity of *comparing* it with foreign countries; they even accepted places and military service in the hope of being useful to their country, from which they had so long been exiled! The return of the Bourbons, whose memory was still cherished, appeared impossible. They remained in a state of calm tranquillity, at a distance from the theatre of their misfortunes, which were considered by all to be beyond the reach of remedy; compelled to renounce the prospect of being governed by them, all parties wished to retain for their Sovereign the man who, by dint of glory, had succeeded in restoring to France the blessings of internal tranquillity.

Sincere, therefore, was the general rejoicing at the birth of the King of Rome; I shared in the hope entertained that this event would have the effect of consolidating that state of repose which France so ardently longed for. Brought up in the turmoil of our cruel Revolution, I dreaded the renewal of those frightful civil wars which had made so deep an impression upon my parents; but I confess that my affections for Josephine made me experience a violent

emotion of anger when I recollected that the woman who held her place was completely happy. Her very happiness increased my aversion for her.

Being imperfectly acquainted at this time with Josephine's elevation of soul, her absolute abnegation of self, and her anxiety for the Emperor's happiness, I felt persuaded that she would, to a certain extent, exhibit the character of *a woman*, and that a slight glance at the past would make her bitterly regret that she was not the mother of this child, whose birth had been hailed with general acclamation. My judgment was that of a frivolous, superficial worldling, only intent upon *the important cares* which the preparations for a ball are wont to create.

On my arrival at the palace, I discovered the true character of the woman who was for a long time the tender companion of her Sovereign, was often his adviser, and at all times his friend. On alighting from the carriage, my ideas underwent a total change; I perceived so much satisfaction upon every countenance, that I felt at no loss to guess the real sentiments of the Empress; who would have ventured to smile had Josephine's mind assumed a serious turn?

We had scarcely entered the apartment when Her Majesty asked if any particulars had been received:

"I regret being so far from Paris," she said at every moment. "Were I at Malmaison, I might receive intelligence in a much shorter space of time!

I am well pleased to find that the painful sacrifice I made to France has proved of some advantage, and that her future prospects are now secured. How great must be the Emperor's delight! I am only grieved at one circumstance, which is, that his happiness should not have been made known to me by himself. He has, however, so many orders to issue, so many congratulations to receive! Ladies, there must be a fête here, as well as elsewhere, to solemnize the fulfilment of this long-wished-for event. I will give you a ball. As the apartments are not spacious, I shall give orders for boarding the hall of the guards, as the whole town of Evreux will be anxious to come and rejoice with us, and I never can have too much company on this occasion. Make your preparations, M. Pierlot; send for one of my dresses; for I will not receive company *in a nightcap*; as for you, gentlemen, I insist for this time that you will appear in full costume."

I have not added anything to what was said by Josephine, though the above words were spoken at various intervals of time. The cheerful countenance of Her Majesty was open and expanded as she spoke; it is impossible to doubt the sincerity with which she expressed her satisfaction. Never, in my opinion, did she display in a more brilliant light how well entitled she was to the exalted rank to which she had been raised.

The Viceroy arrived the next morning, and furnished us all the details we so anxiously expected. He told us how uneasy the Emperor had been respecting the state of the Empress, who was in imminent danger during the pains of her most painful labour; he never ceased recommending to the celebrated Dubois that he should treat her as he would the *wife of a citizen of the Rue St. Denis*; and at the moment when it was feared that either the mother or the child must be sacrificed, he exclaimed: "*Save my wife! the rest is to me of minor consequence!*" Unquestionably, Prince Eugène would not have related, in the presence of Josephine, the above fact, which so clearly proved Napoleon's love for Maria Louisa, had he not known that the latter had *partly* sacrificed her existence to the wants of the State, and even wished for an heir to the throne she had relinquished with the bitterest anguish, since she was parting from the man who possessed her affections, although no feeling of disappointed ambition had contributed to heighten her regret. Many writers have appeared to doubt this truth; but it is important to assert it, as it gives to Her Majesty an additional claim upon our sorrow for her loss. Those who have written that she regretted *the Emperor* much more *than the husband*, must be perfect strangers to a woman's feelings; besides which, they had never approached the woman of whom they formed

so unjust an opinion. Let us, then, forgive an error on their part, which it is our pleasing task to correct.

The Viceroy related with a fund of humour the affected airs which he had seen the Queen of Naples and Princesse Pauline assume during the night previous to the birth of the King of Rome. All the family had assembled in the apartments adjoining the bedroom, together with the high dignitaries appointed to be witnesses of the event. The lamentations and cries of the Empress were distinctly heard. The Princesses had the windows thrown open at every moment, under pretence that they wanted air, and felt sick at being obliged to remain so near the spot ; their weak nerves were overcome by their sister's sufferings !

“ All this affected anguish,” added Eugène, “ could not deceive any one, since the fresh countenances of those ladies sufficiently attested that they had never been in better health. They displayed an expression much nearer akin to excessive vexation than to grief. They no doubt imagined their influence over their brother would greatly diminish, and that of the Empress would proportionably increase. Such was the cause of their nervous attacks ; the feelings of *sisters* lay dormant at that moment, and they assumed far too much the sentiments of *Queens*.”

The utmost reliance may be placed upon these details, which had made too forcible an impression upon my mind ever to be forgotten.

The Viceroy assured Josephine that the Emperor had spoken to him as follows, on his taking leave :

“Eugène, you are going to see your mother; tell her that I am certain she will rejoice more than any one else at my happiness. I should already have written to her, had I not been wrapped up in the delight of looking at my son. I cannot be moved from his side except by indispensable duties; I will this night perform the most pleasing of all by writing to Josephine.”

Accordingly, at eleven o'clock, just as we were about to take tea, we heard a great bustle in the antechambers; the doors of the apartments were opened with a loud noise; the folding doors of the gallery, where the Empress had remained, were suddenly thrown back by the doorkeeper, who exclaimed, “A message from the Emperor!” The Empress and the Viceroy went up to a young page of pleasing countenance, but seemingly much fatigued; this was, I believe, M. de Saint-Hilaire. The Empress recognized him, though she had not seen him for two years. Anxious to afford him time to recover himself, she addressed several questions to him with that graceful air which pervaded all her actions.

Being the bearer of a letter in the Emperor's handwriting, the young man was so apprehensive of losing it that he thrust it down the side-pocket of his coat, and had some difficulty in finding it. The Empress

perceived his embarrassment, and continued to converse with him on matters purely personal to himself. She expressed the sincere regret she felt at the death of his uncle, who had been killed in Spain; at last the letter made its appearance. Her Majesty withdrew, with the Viceroy, for the purpose of perusing and replying to it, after having ordered supper to be prepared for M. de Saint-Hilaire, whom she was anxious to detain until the morrow, in order to afford him time to recover from his fatigues; but he replied that he would take his departure as soon as he should receive Her Majesty's answer to the letter, because he was commissioned to communicate the important news to Her Imperial Highness, the Vice-Queen.* He had performed the journey in six hours, riding at full gallop, the distance from Paris to Navarre being twenty-eight leagues.

The Empress returned to the apartment half an hour after she had left it; her eyes were much swollen, and the Viceroy appeared greatly affected. We were apprehensive of putting any questions respecting the contents of that letter. Josephine guessed our curiosity, and, condescending to gratify it, said that she would read to us what so nearly concerned her, and

* It happened otherwise. M. de Béarn, the chamberlain, was entrusted with this mission, which had been solicited by several persons. He returned quite enraptured with the grace and beauty of the Vice-Queen. He received from her a splendid snuff-box, with her portrait set in large diamonds.

first shewed the written page upon which were penned eight or ten lines ; part of it was covered with ink-blots. I do not exactly recollect the beginning ; but this was, *word for word*, the last phrase of the letter :

“ This child, conjointly with *our Eugène*, will secure my happiness and that of France.”

“ It is impossible to be more amiable,” observed the Empress, “ or to make greater efforts to soften the bitterness which that event would impart to my mind if I were not so sincerely attached to the Emperor. The connection of my son with his own is well worthy of the man who, when he pleases, is the most engaging of all.”

We agreed, in fact, in considering that phrase as a truly happy one. The woman to whom it was addressed was worthy of appreciating its value.

When M. de Saint-Hilaire came to receive Her Majesty's orders, “ This,” she said, “ is for the Emperor, and that for yourself,” handing him her answer to the letter, and a small red morocco case containing a diamond pin of the value of *five thousand francs*. She had ordered it in the event of the birth of a daughter being announced to her, and had intended one of the value of twelve thousand francs for the birth of a son ; but the Viceroy dissuaded her by observing that such a present was of far too great a value ; it would be said that she wanted to make a display of her unbounded generosity ; she should,

therefore, bring it within limits, and do no more than what was correct and proper.

On the occasion of this visit she presented the Viceroy with a splendid set of sapphires of the largest size, surrounded with brilliants, which she destined to be sent by him to the Vice-Queen, who had been lately delivered of a son. Thus it is that I have often seen her part with many articles of great value for the sake of her children,—a proof of the falsehood of the assertion that she was very reluctant to part with any of her jewels. She had ceased to carry them on her person; and I only saw her with brilliants on two occasions during a period of five months: at the ball which I shall presently advert to, and at Malmaison, when the Grand Duke of Wurtzburg came to dine there. On other days she wore a necklace and earrings of fine large pearls for her only ornament.

Her toilet was particularly choice and elegant, though usually free from display, and consisted of tulle and crape dresses, lined with satin; she seldom wore velvet; small blond caps, or diadems composed of flowers formed her head-dress; she had a preference for the latter instead of the coronation head-dress which she wore on days of ceremony, when she was reigning Empress. It weighed no fewer than *three pounds*, and, notwithstanding a very thick piece of velvet placed underneath, her forehead exhibited a deep furrow when she took it off, and it always

brought on a headache, a complaint to which she was very subject at the Tuileries, and which she attributed to the life she led there. The Emperor was deaf to her complaints, and made her drive out in an open carriage as a cure for them. She was often under the necessity of alighting from the carriage, and of stretching herself on a bed in some wretched country inn, where she drank the extract of linden tree and lemon as a remedy. I never saw her affected with that complaint, for she had acquired great corpulency ever since she was at liberty to lead the life that best suited her.

The Viceroy took his departure the day after the Empress had received the Emperor's letter. Our minds were thenceforward wholly engaged with the approaching fête, which I anticipated with more pleasure than any one else, so great was my passion for dancing.

The palace was filled with workmen employed in flooring the hall of the guards, ornamenting the apartments, placing draperies, tables, sideboards, etc.; the tradespeople came in regular succession with provisions of all kinds, bandboxes of flowers, feathers, crapes, etc. The *femmes de chambre* were overloaded with work, and in the most wretched temper; there was a general clamour and confusion throughout the palace; the stewards, especially, were incessantly at work to provide for everything; we were employed in

trying on our robes ; the gentlemen were busy about their Court dresses. Many had forgotten to wear them ; others had to learn their tasks.

M. Pierlot afforded us much enjoyment by the awkwardness of his appearance in a velvet coat embroidered with gold ; his hat and feathers sunk deep over his eyebrows, like a *classical* nightcap, now discarded by men of *romantic ideas* ; the enormous tie of his white satin scarf was placed in the very middle of his chest, his sword was constantly entangled with our dresses, and he cut the most ludicrous figure I ever saw. His appearance presented a remarkable contrast to M. Portalès, who exhibited in his chivalric costume that elegance which is alone calculated to grace it. Every one, in short, had his own business to mind, and the palace was a complete scene of jostling and confusion.

The Empress had summoned to this fête her cousin, Henri de Tascher, to whom she was particularly attached, and who had a claim upon her affection by the amiability of his character and his truly original wit.* Being on terms of the most intimate friendship with M. de Clermont-Tonnerre,† who was,

* He was married to Mdle. Clari, to whom he had been a long time attached. A violent attack of colic deprived this charming woman of her husband in the course of twenty-four hours. The universal regret felt for his loss must have contributed to assuage the grief into which she was plunged by so afflicting a privation.

† Afterwards Minister of War.

as well as himself, an aide-de-camp of King Joseph, he brought him to the fête. The latter was a great favourite of the Empress, owing to his strong likeness to the Emperor at the period I speak of. He was said to be deeply read, and possessed of very general information; but as he was by no means favoured on the score of fortune, and was lost in the army with a crowd of officers of his own rank, nothing could have led to suppose that he would one day be called to hold one of the highest offices in France. He was of a serious turn of mind, a close observer of mankind, and a great enthusiast of Josephine, who was lavish of her kindness to him.

The Princess of Aremburg, sister of Henri de Tascher, had also come to attend the ball. Married, against her will, to the Prince of Aremburg, she could never find any happiness at Court, the habits of which were opposed to her inclinations, though she was calculated to grace it by her elegant figure and pleasing countenance. The Creolian indolence of character, which she displayed in a greater degree than any one I ever saw, gave her an invincible abhorrence for the indispensable duties which it behooved her to submit to. No one could be a more sociable companion or less vain of her unexpected fortune. Nothing could affect her serenity of temper; it was impossible to be acquainted with and not to love her. Her extreme simplicity of manners afforded a re-

markable contrast to the extravagance and pretensions of the other Princesses of the family.* She declared that she found no enjoyment anywhere but at Navarre, from the complete absence of etiquette at that residence. It was asserted that she had been deeply enamoured of one of the general officers attached to the Emperor's person; she had, however, been compelled to contract a brilliant marriage, which was never consummated.†

Her Majesty offered to lend me a set of jewels for that day of rejoicing; but it occurred to me that I should be afraid to stir if I carried about my person anything of value which did not belong to me; I therefore declined the offer, and resolved, though not without some reluctance, to wear my humble pearl necklace, which would not, at all events, prevent me from dancing. Mdles. de Mackau and de Castellane, who had accepted the proposal made to them by the Empress, would have willingly exchanged places with me during the night. They never failed to inquire at

* We should except from the number Princess Stephanie, dowager Grand Duchess of Baden, who is said to exhibit the most amiable character, combined with the most exalted rank.

† It has been broken since the Restoration; she renounced the title of Princess to follow the dictates of her heart by marrying the Comte de Guitry, formerly an equerry of the Empress Josephine. It is said that he does not duly appreciate the sacrifice made in his favour by a charming woman, who brought him a very large fortune, and that he neglects to make her as happy as she deserves to be. I cannot assert that these reports are well founded; but of this I am certain, that Madame de Guitry will derive sources of consolation and courage from her maternal duties and her unaffected piety.

every country dance whether any portion of their jewels was missing, and it was plain to perceive that they hardly ventured to stir from an apprehension of losing any part of it.

At last, to our great satisfaction, the hour tolled for opening the ball; the ladies of Evreux came flocking to the house; many of them dressed with all the bad taste peculiar to the province, but the greater number extremely well attired. The men appeared in full dress as on ordinary occasions.

As soon as a great part of the company had assembled, the doors communicating with Josephine's apartments were thrown open, and she entered the ballroom in the most elegant attire, and resplendent with diamonds. She wore a silver llama dress with a magnificent diadem, and was attended by all the officers and ladies of her household. This *cortége* and her appearance were the same as on the occasion of a fête at the Tuileries. She made the round of the ballroom, addressing some obliging expressions to every lady, and afterwards sat down, when the ball was immediately opened.

M. de Clermont-Tonnerre furnished an episode which excited the risible faculties of every one except himself. As he was dancing in the presence of Her Majesty, he strove to do his best, and ventured upon a caper which was attended with unpleasant consequences. M. de Clermont-Tonnerre was a very corpu-

lent man, and he alighted so heavily upon his feet that he forced in the floor, which had been raised to an elevation of six inches above the marble pavement. His foot got so entangled that it was necessary to send for a carpenter to widen the hole in which he had been caught like a fox in a trap. The efforts he made to extricate himself of his own accord had occasioned a swelling in his leg, and he suffered the most acute pain. Unwilling, however, to acknowledge it, he persisted in joining two or three more country dances. It was easy to perceive that he used every exertion to stifle the pain, and to evade the jokes that were constantly kept up at his expense. With a view to annoy him we repeatedly affected to inquire how he found himself; and we did so with an earnestness which had the effect of ruffling his temper. This was an additional source of mirth to us. I acknowledge we were wrong; but we may be forgiven those little jokes when it is considered that we were then very young and very giddy, and that nothing appeared to us more ridiculous than the sight of a *corpulent old man of thirty* presuming to dance.

“What! is he thirty years of age?” we said to each other. “Why, he is quite an old man!” I may venture to assert that not one of us is any longer of that opinion.

A splendid supper was served up at two o’clock in the morning. Three tables were laid; that of the

Empress consisted of thirty covers. We all sat down to it with the exception of Madame d'Arberg, who did the honours of the second, and Madame de Ségur of the third table. The principal ladies of the town were invited to Josephine's table. The men supped after us. The company retired at four o'clock. Everything had been arranged with the utmost order, and I am well persuaded that the fête is still fresh in the recollection of the inhabitants of Evreux.

CHAPTER XXII.

Saint Joseph's Day at Navarre. — Fête of the Empress at Evreux. — A Te Deum Is Sung. — Josephine's Private Secretary. — Songs Analogous to the Occasion. — Madame d' Audenarde, Mdle. de Mackau, Madame Gazani, Mdle. de Castellane, Madame de Colbert. — Deputation from the Village of Annières. — Mesdames de Ségur, de Vieil-Castel, MM. Pierlot, Deschamps, Horeau. — The Comte de Turpin's Pack of Cards. — The Empress Presents Me with a Cashmere Shawl.

I HAVE forgotten to state in what manner Saint Joseph's Day was celebrated at Navarre. The following is the description of a fête which took place when I was with the Empress.

In the early part of the day a deputation of young ladies of the first families in the town of Evreux came to the palace of Navarre carrying a bust of the Empress under a canopy of flowers. The mayor's daughter recited verses in praise of Her Majesty, who was so much renowned in the province for her benevolent character.* A handsome breakfast was provided for

* Independently of distributing considerable alms, she had endowed a school for poor orphan girls, where they learned to read and write, and were taught arithmetic, sewing, and lace-making; Her Majesty had purchased an extensive plot of ground for building a theatre, and for extending the public walk, which was very small and badly planted.

them, which was graced by the presence of Her Majesty, who made several choice presents to her visitors.

She gave strict injunctions that there should be no public rejoicings at Evreux on the occasion of her fête. Notwithstanding her orders, a *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral, the town was generally illuminated, and large bonfires were lighted up in the remotest corners as well as in the great square.*

M. Deschamps brought us, in the evening, some stanzas which we were to sing to Her Majesty. This was the first time of her being at Navarre on such an occasion. She distributed her charity in such abundance in the vicinity that it occurred to some persons of the company to disguise themselves as peasants coming to thank her for her bounty. The remainder sang the verses in their own name. They have never yet been published; the author had composed several pretty ballads; he had been for a long time Her

* Josephine would have been much flattered by those testimonies of attachment, but she felt apprehensive of their exciting the Emperor's displeasure. She knew that Maria Louisa was exceedingly jealous of the affection still retained for her rival. She felt an abhorrence for whatever was calculated to remind her of the woman whose place she occupied. On her way to St. Germain she always took the road to Chatou, in order to avoid passing before Malmaison. This envious disposition must have been the source of much uneasiness to her, for, notwithstanding the favour she enjoyed, she never could succeed in weakening her husband's regard for Josephine; he took no pains to conceal it. He often spoke of her, and neglected no opportunity of extolling the woman whom he had driven to despair through his insatiable ambition. He must have regretted her still more at the period of his misfortunes. Had she lived, he would, at least, have preserved a friend prepared to endure every sacrifice for his sake.

Majesty's private secretary, was sincerely attached to her, and was much valued by her in return. It has, therefore, occurred to me that, although the composition might not possess any claim to particular notice, its apropos entitled it to a place amongst recollections principally consecrated to Josephine's memory.*

AIR: *Le Roi des Preux, le fier Roland.*

GENERAL CHORUS.

Comme nos cœurs, joignons nos voix,
 Chantons l' auguste Joséphine.
 Aux fleurs qui naissent sous ses lois
 Sa main ne laisse pas d' épine.
 Partout la suit de ses bienfaits
 Ou l' espérance, ou la mémoire ;
 De Joséphine pour jamais
 Vive le nom ! vive la gloire ! (*Bis.*)

MADAME D' AUDENARDE MÈRE.

AIR: *Partant pour la Syrie.*

Long-temps d' un fils que j' aime †
 J' enviai le bonheur ;
 Mais près de vous, moi-même,
 Rien ne manque à mon cœur.
 Si tous les dons de plaire
 Forment vos attributs,
 Hommage, amour sincère
 Pour vous sont nos tributs. (*Bis.*)

* It is supposed that M. Deschamps drowned himself. After the death of Josephine, his situation became the more distressing as he had undertaken the charge of a young orphan girl. Finding himself without any resources at an age at which it is difficult to create them, he disappeared from his home, and never more returned to it.

† Général d' Audenarde was equerry to the Emperor.

MADEMOISELLE DE MACKAU.

AIR: *L'Hymen est un lien charmant.*

Loin d'elle j'ai dû regretter
Une princesse auguste et chère ;
Manheim l'adore et la révère,*
Et j'ai pleuré de la quitter ; (Bis.)
Mais quand j'ai vu de son image
Le modèle dans votre cour,
Mon cœur sentit un doux présage ; (Bis.)
Bientôt les charmes du séjour
Ont séché les pleurs du voyage. (Bis.)

C'est le bonheur le plus parfait
Qui règne ici sous vos auspices ;
Mais de vos bontés protectrices
Qui mieux que moi ressent l'effet ? (Bis.)
Le monde et la cour à mon âge
N'offraient que des bords inconnus :
Mais près de vous je prends courage. (Bis.)
J'ai votre exemple et vos vertus
Pour guide et pour but du voyage. (Bis.)

MADAME GAZANI.

AIR: *A deux époques de la vie.*

Gênes me vit des mon jeune âge
Brûler d'être à vous pour jamais.

* Princess Stephanie, of Baden, to whom she was attached as one of the ladies of her household. With the view of bringing her nearer to M. de Mackau, her father, Josephine requested that she might be allowed to enter her household on the occasion of the divorce, when several of the ladies quitted her for Maria Louisa, a circumstance which greatly indisposed the Emperor towards them.

Votre œil distingua mon hommage,*
 Votre cœur combla mes souhaits.
 A vos bontés, à leur constance,
 Je dois tout; et puissent vos yeux
 Voir ici ma reconnaissance,
 Comme à Gênes ils ont vu mes vœux.

MADemoisELLE DE CASTELLANE.

AIR: *Que ne suis-je la fougère.*

Vous dont les bontés chéries
 Ont pris soin de mon bonheur,†
 Dans ces fleurs pour vous cueillies
 Voyez l' hommage du cœur.
 Marqués par la bienfaisance
 Tous vos jours vous font aimer:
 Laissez la reconnaissance
 En prendre un pour s'exprimer.

MADAME DE COLBERT (AUGUSTE).‡

Même air.

Dans les murs de Charlemagne
 J' ai pu vous offrir mes vœux;
 D' une fête de campagne
 Pour vous nous formions les jeux;

* She had never been called to Paris by the Empress, but quite the contrary by the Emperor, who was charmed with her beauty. Josephine never took a liking for her until their common misfortune had pleaded in her favour.

† Until her arrival at Navarre, Mdle. de Castellane had resided at the house of Madame Campan, where the pensions of herself and of her sister were paid by the Empress.

‡ The gallant Général Colbert was killed in Spain whilst preparing his soldiers for action.

Ce temps, qu'ici tout rappelle,
 Vient de ranimer mon cœur ;
 En retrouvant tout mon zèle,
 J' ai retrouvé le bonheur.*

MYSELF.

AIR: *A peine au sortir de l'enfance.*

Vos vertus, leurs grâces et leur charme
 Sont les premiers mots que j' appris ;
 Une tante, objet de mes larmes,
 Jusqu' au tombeau les a chéris.†
 Mon cœur, à ses soins, à son zèle,
 Doit l' héritage le plus doux,
 Celui de vos bontés pour elle,
 Et de tout son amour pour vous. (Bis.)

A deputation was announced from Annières, a village dependent upon, and in the vicinity of, Navarre. It consisted of Mesdames Pierlot and Ségur, and of MM. de Turpin, de Vieil-Castel, Deschamps, Horeau and others.

RONDE.

AIR: *Allons aux prés St.-Gervais.*

COLETTE (MADAME DE SÉGUR).

De nos cœurs, de nos hameaux
 Chantons l' auguste Souveraine ;
 Que les fils d' or les plus beaux
 Lui forment long-temps des jours nouveaux.

* She is now Comtesse de la Briffe.

† Madame de M——, a friend of Her Majesty, who disinherited us, although she had evinced the strongest attachment for us until the moment of her death.

Déjà dans tout son domaine
 All' commande des travaux ;
 J'aurons tous, au bout de' la s'maine,
 La poule au pot.

MATHURIN (M. DE VIEIL-CASTEL).
 Sur les monts vl' à qu' on amène
 Des parures d' arbrisseaux,
 Et que l' on fait de la plaine
 Partir les eaux.*

COLETTE.
 Des chevreuils dans la garenne,
 Des chamois sur les côteaux ;
 Et dans la forêt s' promènent †
 Des animaux.

MATHURIN.
 Nos jardins des terres lointaines
 Lui doivent ses végétaux ; ‡
 Nos cités lui doivent la laine
 Des mérinos.

COLETTE.
 Dans Evreux ses mains soutiennent
 Pour les arts d' heureux berceaux,
 Ous' que les jeunes fill' apprennent §
 Mieux qu' leurs fuseaux.

* Marshes dried up at the expense of the Empress, who, in so doing, rendered a very important service to many neighbouring villages.

† She had procured several chamois from Chamouny, and had restored the walks in the park and forest to the inhabitants of Evreux, who had for a long time been deprived of them.

‡ Greenhouses kept at Navarre, under M. Bonpland's superintendence.

§ The school of young girls founded by the Empress.

MATHURIN.

Ali' veut qu' es promenades y prennent *
 Des alignemens nouveaux,
 Et qu' on ôte à *Merpomène*
 Ses vieux tréteaux.

COLETTE.

Si tous ceux qui, dans leur peine,
 Ont eu part à ses cadeaux,
 D'un' fleur lui portaient l' étrenne,
 L' bouquet s'rait beau.

MADAME DE SÉGUR COMING FORWARD.

AIR : *J' ons un curé patriote.*

Voulant de mon tendre hommage
 Peindre la sincérité,
 J'ai pris l' habit, le langage
 Qu' adopte la vérité.
 Vous connaissez dès long-temps
 Mon zèle et mes sentimens,
 Et pour vous (*bis*) ils seront toujours constans !
 Toujours constans !
 Toujours constans !

M. de Turpin then presented to the Empress a pack of cards with the portraits of every person composing her society. Not only were the likenesses perfect, but he had displayed much talent in taking off their respective attitudes. Many delightful accessories sprang up under his fertile pencil. M. de Turpin

* Lands purchased by Her Majesty for the purpose of extending the public walk, and building a theatre.

has also drawn in *Sépia* several views of Navarre, which are remarkable for their composition and correctness.

The chamberlain of the Empress, M. de Vieil-Castel, came one morning to say that Her Majesty desired to speak with me in her private apartment. His manner was so solemn that, without reflecting that this air of dignity was natural to him whenever he pronounced the name of the Empress or exercised any of the prerogatives of his place, I trembled like a leaf, fancying I had probably done some ridiculous or unbecoming act, and that Her Majesty was going to scold me. I was so completely agitated by the impression of having displeased her, that I was quite beside myself with apprehension. M. de Vieil-Castel was obliged to repeat the order for me to repair immediately to the Empress. He was also of opinion, I believe, that this interview was likely to be an unpleasant one; for, so far from calming my uneasiness, when I expressed my forebodings, he replied that it was my duty to obey. His conduct towards me on this occasion was so extremely abrupt that I felt the more convinced of my having displeased Her Majesty.

My giddiness allowed me no time for reflection; I could scarcely support myself when I appeared before Josephine, with downcast eyes and a pale and dejected countenance. She asked, in so mild a tone of voice,

what ailed me, that I immediately recovered myself, and resumed my wonted composure towards her.

“This paleness of countenance is unusual to you, mademoiselle,” said Josephine to me, smiling; “you are not accustomed to the cold weather we have here.”

“I assure Your Majesty that I do not feel it; a slight indisposition —”

“No; I am satisfied that the dampness of Navarre is robbing you of your fine colour; you must keep yourself warmly clad if you wish it to return. This shawl will be of use to you; do me the pleasure to accept it, and take that one to your mother; she is indisposed, and I shall presently call to see her.”

It will readily be imagined how much I was delighted, not only at having escaped a scolding, but at finding myself possessed of a long cashmere shawl *à palmes*. I was quite bewildered with surprise; and, without even thanking the Empress, I hurried away from her apartment with the rapidity of lightning, flew to my mother in order to hand Her Majesty's present to her, and instantly ran off through the long passage of our apartment, stopping on my way to bid the ladies look at my handsome shawl. “It is mine,” I said, and, without allowing them time to examine it, continued my precipitate flight. They thought me mad; and I really believe I was seized at that moment with a slight tinge of folly.

The sudden transition from excessive fright to the pleasure of possessing an article of dress which was at that time an object of ambition, much more than at the present day, had quite bewildered me. When I recovered some degree of composure, it occurred to me that I had neglected to thank Her Majesty, and I again fell a prey to agitation and to the utmost distress of mind at having been guilty of so unaccountable an omission.

I immediately called on Madame d' Arberg and related my trouble to her; she was at all times the confidante of my inmost thoughts; her uniform kindness afforded me a sure pledge of her indulgence. I often stood in need of it, for, like another *Ninette*, I was constantly contravening the Court etiquette; she calmed my fears, gave me good advice, and made me consider it a piece of good fortune that I had found so kind a friend.

I shewed her the shawl which had been the cause of so much uneasiness; she had seen it before it came to my hands, and told me that, so far from the Empress being offended at my abrupt flight, she had greatly enjoyed it, as the best proof I could give of the pleasure her gift had afforded me. "Besides which," added Madame d' Arberg, "so few persons appear in their true character, that Her Majesty is very partial to those who display any candour, and who neither study their countenances nor their ex-

pressions. Continue as you are, and you are sure to please her!" I only repeat these words to shew what a happy life was led at Navarre, since there was so much readiness to excuse errors, and to set a value upon those qualities that were calculated to extenuate them.

I felt delighted and proud to shew my shawl to M. de Vieil-Castel, and to tell him of the fright he had occasioned me by his grave countenance. He was less partial to us than any one else, and felt disappointed, I think, that, without being attached to the Empress by any functions about her person, we should be treated in the same manner as the ladies of her household. He was not possessed of any fortune; he ambitioned every favour, and calculated the value of the presents we received as if it had been so much taken from him. We had no particular ground of complaint against him; being accustomed, however, to the gentle and agreeable manners of the greater part of the society, we considered his deportment as forming a contrast to theirs; his character, moreover, had nothing to recommend it on the score of amiability. He was fawning, mild, and obsequious towards his superiors, but extremely harsh towards his inferiors. He was *too assiduous* to Her Majesty, who occasionally grew impatient at being, as it were, servilely attended upon by him. She delighted in finding a complaisant and obliging

character in any one, but had an utter aversion for a servile and *fawning* disposition. The latter is a correct description of the character of M. de Vieil-Castel, in his intercourse with her. We were all partial to his wife, a handsome young woman of great amenity of temper.* We were all aware that he rendered her unhappy by his tyrannical disposition. The Empress entertained for this lady the sincerest affection, of which she afforded her the most striking testimony.

Madame de Vieil-Castel, whose attachments were always consistent with reason, had a particular regard for her eldest sister, by whom she had been reared, and who had for a long time been in an alarming state of health, though without any apprehensions being felt of her being in imminent danger. Her illness assumed on a sudden a serious turn, and in a few days she was thrown into the agonies of death. M. de Vieil-Castel, feeling reluctant to relinquish his residence at Navarre, determined to conceal from his wife the news he had just received; he imparted it to Her Majesty, saying that he was desirous of avoiding a painful scene, and deemed it more prudent to conceal the news from Madame de Vieil-Castel.

“You are quite right,” said the Empress; “Madame de Vieil-Castel is so tender-hearted that I should

* She was M. de Mirabeau's niece.

greatly apprehend for her the consequences of a sight so afflicting as that of a dying sister. Since there is no longer any hope, send for your children, in order that they may be on the spot when it will be necessary to announce the death of their aunt; you will bring them to my apartment, and I will take upon myself that painful commission."

The children arrived in deep mourning a few days afterwards. Her Majesty took them by the hand, and led them into the apartment of Madame de Vieil-Castel, who had only been prepared since the morning for the loss which threatened her.

"Do not spare your tears, madame," said Josephine to her; "you have suffered a severe loss, but look upon these remaining objects of your affection."

She stayed a great part of the morning with Madame de Vieil-Castel. Joséphine, who had already suffered the deepest afflictions, knew in what language to address a heart penetrated with grief; she calmed the first ebullitions of so justifiable and cruel a sorrow.

The above trait affords a faithful description of Josephine's character. This tender foresight, which led her to administer consolation at the moment of her imparting unwelcome news, could only be suggested by a mind of her elevated stamp.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Empress Relates to Us the Circumstances of Her Divorce.

— Letter Written by Her to the Emperor a Few Days Afterwards. — Josephine's Letter to the Pope. — Conduct of the Viceroy and of Queen Hortense. — They Wish to Quit France. — Firmness and Courage Displayed by Josephine.

WHILST the question of the divorce was vaguely rumoured about, the Empress was, as she informed us, in a state of constant agitation, which greatly endangered her health.

In the salon which she usually occupied at the Tuileries, there was a small door communicating with the Emperor's closet, by a hidden staircase. When he wished to consult Josephine, or to converse with her, he came in person to rap at her door. She understood the signal, stepped down, and her ladies waited until her return. Her absence was occasionally so much protracted (those conferences only took place in the evening) that she found every one asleep on her return, and laughed heartily at the constrained postures adopted by those ladies, out of regard for their toilets. Latterly, every knock at

that door caused her such violent palpitations that she felt a difficulty in breathing; she always apprehended to hear the confirmation of what she most dreaded to learn.

When at last she was apprised of her fate, she wept so bitterly that for upwards of six months her sight was affected; her eyes were so oppressed that she was unable to bear the open light, and could no longer distinguish any object. Nevertheless, she did not hesitate in adopting a determination; and she alone revived the courage of her children, who were deeply affected at the news.

The following is the letter she wrote to the Emperor, five or six days after the divorce had been pronounced.

“TO THE EMPEROR.

“My forebodings are realized! You have just pronounced the word which separates us forever; the rest is nothing more than mere formality. Such, then, is the result, I shall not say of so many sacrifices (they were light to me, since they had you for their object), but of an unbounded friendship on my part, and of the most solemn oaths on yours! It would be a consolation for me, if the State, which you allege as your motive, were to repay my sacrifice by justifying your conduct! But that public consideration, which you urge as the ground for deserting me, is a mere pretence on your part; your mistaken ambition has ever been, and will continue to be, the guide of all your actions — a guide which has led you to conquests and to the assumption of a crown, and is now driving you on to disasters, and to the brink of a precipice.

“You speak of the necessity of contracting an alliance, of giving an heir to your Empire, of founding a dynasty! But with whom are you about to form an alliance? With the natural enemy of France, that artful House of Austria, whose detestation of our country has its rise in its innate feelings, in its system, in the laws of necessity. Do you believe that this hatred, of which she has given us such abundant proofs, more particularly for the last fifty years, has not been transferred by her from the Kingdom of France to the French Empire? That the children of Maria Theresa, that skilful Sovereign who purchased from Madame de Pompadour the fatal treaty of 1756, which you never mention without shuddering; do you imagine, I repeat, that her posterity, when inheriting her power, has not also inherited her spirit? I am merely repeating what you have so often said to me; but at that time your ambition was satisfied with humbling a power which you now find it convenient to restore to its former rank. Believe me, as long as you shall exercise a sway over Europe, that power will be submissive to you; but beware of reverses of fortune.

“As to the necessity of an heir, I must speak out, at the risk of appearing in the character of a mother prejudiced in favour of her son. Ought I, in fact, to be silent when I consider the interests of one who is my only delight, and upon whom alone you had built all your hopes? That adoption of the 12th of January, 1806, was, then, another political falsehood! Nevertheless, the talents, the virtues of my Eugène are no illusion. How often have you not spoken in his praise? I may say more. You thought it right to reward him by the gift of a throne, and have repeatedly said that he was deserving of greater favours. Well, then, France has frequently reëchoed these praises; but you are now indifferent to the wishes of France.

“I say nothing to you at present of the person who is destined to succeed me, and you do not expect that I should make any allusion to this subject. You might suspect the feelings which dictated my language; nevertheless, you can never doubt of the sincerity of my wishes for your happiness; may it, at least, afford me some consolation for my sufferings. Great, indeed, will be that happiness if it should ever bear any proportion to them.”

The Viceroy and Queen Hortense had both determined to quit France forever, and to accompany their mother to Italy, where she proposed to reside. She it was who represented that the Emperor was a benefactor and a father to them; they owed him an unlimited obedience, and would add to her sorrows by giving any cause of displeasure to their Sovereign. In short, she spoke to them with so much warmth that they consented to remain, and to be witnesses at a later period of a marriage which could not fail to be abhorrent to their feelings. The noble conduct displayed by the Viceroy, when the marriage of his mother was annulled, is known to every one; it excited no surprise, an act of heroism and dignity was natural to him.

I am merely penning my recollections, and it forms no part of my plan to relate events of far too much importance to be described by a female hand. The recital would require a force and energy of diction to which I can lay no claim; I must confine myself to

the work of tracing light portraits, the chief merit of which consists in the resemblance of each character, and a strict adherence to truth. Nevertheless, it behooves me to correct a serious error into which the Duc de Rovigo has repeatedly fallen in the course of his "Memoirs."

He alleges that the Empress Josephine's marriage with the Emperor was confined to the *civil* contract. I can bear testimony to the fact of her having, as well as the Viceroy, affirmed the contrary on several occasions, in the presence of myself, and of many persons in the habits of close intimacy with her at the palace of Navarre.

The Empress related to us that, three days before the coronation, Cardinal Fesch, in obedience to the Pope's formal injunction, gave the nuptial blessing to the married couple at the hour of midnight, in the chapel of the Tuileries; very few persons were witnesses to the ceremony.

To the best of my recollection, Marshal Duroc and Prince Eugène were present on the occasion; but I do not possess sufficient information on the subject to be able to affirm it.

The Pope felt a particular regard for the Empress, whose elevation of mind was well known to him; she frequently wrote to His Holiness; the following is one of her letters, which was written a short time before the coronation.

"TO HIS HOLINESS, PIUS VII.

"However familiar Your Holiness may be with human vicissitudes, owing to your intimate acquaintance with our religion, you will, doubtless, be surprised at beholding a woman raised from obscurity, and on the eve of receiving from your hands the noblest crown in Europe. In the occurrence of so extraordinary an event she discovers the hand of God, and returns thanks for His favours, without presuming to inquire into the designs of His providence. I should, nevertheless, be ungrateful, holy father, even whilst I glorify our Creator, were I to omit confiding my inmost feelings to the paternal heart of one whom He has chosen to represent Him upon earth. My first sentiment, to which all others are subservient, is a conviction of my own weakness and incapacity; of myself I am altogether an insignificant being; or, to speak more correctly, my only value is derived from the extraordinary man to whom I am united. This inward conviction, which occasionally humbles my pride, eventually affords me some encouragement when engaged in calm reflection. I whisper to myself that the arm under which the whole earth is made to tremble may well support my weakness; and that this consideration should have the effect of strengthening it. Numberless, however, are the shoals that surround the elevated rank to which he is raising me. I say nothing of the moral corruption which in the midst of worldly grandeur assails the purest hearts; I have a sufficiently good opinion of mine not to apprehend its effects. Nevertheless, when I look down from that height from whence all other dignities must dwindle to nothing, how can I come at a knowledge of actual wretchedness? And yet, alas! I feel that in becoming Empress of the French I should also be their mother; although I should cherish them to little purpose, unless I could evince my affection in a more effectual manner than by mere wishes for

their happiness! Nations have a right to demand good deeds from those who govern them; and Your Holiness, who are wont to return the respectful love of your subjects, not only by constant acts of justice but also by the kindest benefits, are better calculated than any other Sovereign to prove to me by your own example the efficacy of the doctrine you have put in practice. Let me hope, therefore, that whilst you pour the holy oil upon my head, you will not only impress me with the truth of the above precepts, of which my heart never entertained a doubt, but also impart to me those counsels which will render their practical application an easy task."

The Empress was desirous of being furnished with her marriage certificate, which was accordingly put into her hands. She delivered it over to the Viceroy, who took it with him to Italy, under an apprehension of its being mislaid or surreptitiously withdrawn from his mother.

When it was a question of the marriage of Maria Louisa, she caused Josephine to be asked whether she had been married by the Church, as she would then feel it impossible to consent to an union which in that case she could not but consider as a sacrilege. The Empress transmitted for answer that she might refer to the *Moniteur* for information. She was thus eluding the truth without denying it, being well aware that Napoleon had refused his consent to the publication in the official journal of a ceremony so long delayed. This is, at least, what I have frequently heard from Her Majesty's own lips. May not M. de

Rovigo be ignorant of these details? and is their correctness to be denied because they are unknown to him?

The Viceroy's character was too candid and upright to warrant our doubting the truth of his assertions; I must, therefore, persist in maintaining the correctness of what I have just stated, and all those who, like myself, were about Josephine's person will entertain the same conviction. It is, moreover, in perfect accordance with reason, as it seems impossible to admit that the Pope, who was the Head of the Church, should have consented to crown a female whom he should not have considered bound by the ties of wedlock. The policy of Sovereigns has, at all times, sanctioned the cruel custom of discarding their wives when the welfare of the State appeared to require it. Nevertheless, it will be allowed that the legality of their title would not be contested to them, although they had been deprived of that title.

I have deemed it my duty to communicate these details, such as they have been made known to me; but I now hasten to lay aside a style that is unbecoming any one but a writer competent to relate historical events. I dismiss a subject which was a source of so much affliction to the whole nation, and return to Navarre, which, after such protracted anxieties, had resumed its wonted calm.

The Emperor wrote every week to Josephine laconic notes couched in the most affectionate language.

She was grateful at all times for this mark of attention; and frequently read to us some passages of them, which were replete with undisguised tenderness. They were so covered with ink-blots, as to make me imagine, owing to my short-sightedness, that Napoleon wrote upon bordered paper; I mentioned it to Madame d'Arberg, who greatly enjoyed my mistake, and corrected it by telling me the plain truth, which was that Napoleon wrote very fast, and often shook his pen to such a degree as to occasion those *pretty drawings* that had created my amazement.

He always spoke of the King of Rome in his letters, and of the pleasure he should feel in bringing him to Josephine when he grew a little older. She was most anxious to see this child who had caused her such a bitter sacrifice; but she felt persuaded that Maria Louisa would never allow it. She had made so many inquiries on the subject of the latter as to have acquired a correct knowledge of her character.

No circumstance has ever been recorded that could afford an exalted opinion of the mind of this youthful Sovereign, who was welcomed with so much kindness; this is a clear proof that it had nothing to recommend it. Her conduct since 1814 has shewn the extent of her sensibility.

She was greeted by all parties on her arrival in France, although a deep regret was felt for the amiable woman whom she came to supplant. The nation

eagerly sought to find in the newcomer that uniform kindness of disposition, that tender compassion for every species of misfortune, that protection to the fine arts, that exhaustless generosity in relieving sorrows, which so eminently distinguished her predecessor. She only exhibited a frigid dignity, a thorough knowledge of Court etiquette, great mildness of disposition, and that finished education to which all Northern Princesses can lay claim. The courtiers had certainly an Empress to their liking; but the French in general had lost a mother. By degrees the enthusiasm excited by the arrival of the niece of Marie Antoinette was allayed; and all shewed an eagerness to return and pay their court to the Sovereign who could forgive those who had neglected and offended her, and whose company had so many charms.

She received several letters from persons attached to the Emperor, who were desirous of spending a few days at Navarre. Feeling apprehensive that such excursions would injure them in the opinion of the reigning Empress, she declined the company of all those with whom she had not been in habits of intimacy when she resided at the Tuileries.

The beautiful Madame de Canisy, a Lady of Honour of Maria Louisa, after having held that rank near Josephine, arrived one morning at Navarre to request the friendly interference of the Empress in a matter of vital interest to her future happiness. Having

been divorced from M. de Canisy, she had long solicited the Emperor's consent to her marriage with M. de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza. Napoleon replied that he would never permit such a scandal; he could not interfere with other people's inclinations; but in that case it would be necessary to resign every situation at Court, and remove to a distance from Paris.

Madame de Canisy was conversing with Her Majesty at the extremity of the gallery, and crying most bitterly. I never saw any beauty to compare with this lady in tears, and did not conceive it possible that a request preferred by such a woman could be denied. The Empress declined interfering in the business, "feeling assured," as she said, "that a refusal would be the consequence. It would be too painful for me to read in the Emperor's reply that he would not allow of any divorce at Court. *One divorce alone could receive his sanction!*"

She persuaded Madame de Canisy to take courage, shewed her the utmost kindness, and dismissed her, almost pleased at the interview, although she had not acceded to her request. I have never forgotten the fascinating countenance of Madame de Canisy, who, immediately upon the return of the Bourbons, contracted the long-wished-for marriage, which was to indemnify her for the sufferings of her former union. She married M. de Caulaincourt, and her conduct

until the moment when death deprived her of her husband sufficiently attested the tenderness of her affection for him.

Josephine put some questions to Madame de Canisy respecting Maria Louisa.

“Is it true,” she asked, “that she is so serious? She has, assuredly, no cause to be dissatisfied. I should be delighted to hear of her possessing a cheerful disposition; for the Emperor would not be happy if she were of a dejected turn of mind. We might both have met if she had felt inclined for the interview. Napoleon proposed it to her, but she rejected the proposal with so much ill humour that he never repeated it. I regret the circumstance; her presence would not have caused me any mortification; and I should have advised her as to the course she ought to pursue in order to please the Emperor; and I should deeply deplore his experiencing any domestic troubles. When I was at the Tuileries I often found him deploring some petty family quarrels, which he did not always succeed in appeasing, and have as often been the means of restoring harmony. Do not forget to recommend the like conduct to Maria Louisa; let her, above all things, endeavour to be on good terms with the Queen of Naples, whose temper is not easily managed.”

Madame de Canisy assured her that the Emperor was pleased with his new wife, a remark which

seemed to afford satisfaction to the one he had spurned from his side.

Josephine addressed the following letters to Madame Murat and to the Empress-Mother ; they will afford a correct idea of her conciliating disposition :

“TO MADAME MURAT.

“Sister, you are not a woman of a common stamp ; you must, therefore, be written to in a style widely different from that which is addressed to ordinary women. I must own, frankly, and without disguise, that I am not pleased with you. Is it possible that you should compel poor Murat to shed tears ? I can excuse his laying his victorious arms at your feet ; Hercules was, no doubt, seen to spin at those of Omphale, but never to shed tears before her. Possessing, as you do, such powers of captivating, why should you prefer the language of command ? Your husband is submissive from a sense of fear, when he could wish to yield to no other control than that of your personal charms. By thus exchanging parts, you turn a gallant soldier into a timid slave, and exact obedience to yourself as to a despot. The one character is disgraceful to him, the other cannot redound to your credit. The pride of women consists in submission, and we should have no other power than such as a mild and gentle character imparts to us. Your husband, who already ranks so high by his valour and his exploits, fancies that all his laurels must fade away when he appears in your presence. You place your pride in compelling them to bend beneath your pretensions, and the title of being the sister of a hero is sufficient in your sight to constitute you a heroine. Believe me, sister, this quality, and the character which it infers, are ill suited to us. Let us share, with becoming modesty, the glory of

our husbands, and rest our own upon the task of softening their manners, and procuring the indulgence of mankind for their exploits. Let us merit from the public, who extol the bravery of heroes, that they should likewise applaud that gentleness of disposition which Providence imparts to their wives with a view of restraining their impetuosity."

"TO THE EMPRESS-MOTHER.

"Madame and respected mother, exert the ascendancy to which your experience, your dignity, your virtues, and your love for the Emperor give you so just a claim, in order to restore that domestic harmony which is banished from his family. I was fearful of raising my voice in the midst of those internal discords, under an apprehension that calumny might accuse me of exasperating them by my interference. It becomes you alone, madame, to allay them, and to this effect it will be sufficient for you to say that you are apprised of them. Your prudence will have commenced the work of reconciliation by pointing out the evil; theirs alone can suggest the remedy.

"I refrain from mentioning names; your penetration will not fail to discover the real characters of all parties concerned. You are no stranger to human passions; and those vices, which have never found a place in your heart, cannot fail to exhibit them in their workings upon those who are dear to you, owing to the deep interest which you feel in their happiness. You will not be much at a loss to discover the rapid strides of ambition, perhaps also of cupidity, in more than one mind which had hitherto proved free from disguise, but which the favours of fortune are beginning to lead astray. You will discover with apprehension the growing havoc of luxury, and with still greater regret that unfeelingness which

follows in its train. I refrain, however, from dwelling upon this reproach, as it is, perhaps, less founded than the others, and I may have mistaken for heartless insensibility what was, perhaps, nothing more than a mental infatuation. Be this as it may, such infatuation, which manifests itself by vanity, by an overbearing conduct, by insulting refusals, produces deplorable effects upon all those who are witnesses to it. There is no difficulty in reminding of their origin those who appear to have forgotten it; and the only way to be forgiven one's elevation of fortune is to share its gifts with those upon whom its favours have not alighted."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Empress and M. Horeau, Her Medical Attendant. — Various Traits of Tender-heartedness. — Promenades in Sledges. — Mdle. Avrillon Breaks Her Leg. — The Empress Goes Every Day to Visit Her.

THE Empress always inquired of M. Horeau, her medical man, if there were any persons dangerously ill in her establishment. When he replied in the affirmative, she sent money for the purpose of calming the anxiety that might be felt by the unfortunate patient.

The man upon whom devolved the duty of distributing coals in the kitchen was attacked with a malignant fever, which placed his life in imminent danger. The Empress heard of it, and particularly recommended him to the care of M. Horeau, whose talents kept pace with his humane feelings.

“Consider, my dear doctor,” said Josephine, “that he has six children; neglect no attentions towards him, and tell the overseer of the infirmary that she must redouble her zeal for the unhappy man.”

M. Horeau answered that the malignant fever had assumed a less alarming turn, and he hoped to save the coal man, whose health was, in fact, considerably

improved. One morning, however, he dismissed, under various pretences, the nurse and the overseer of the infirmary, got up, and threw himself out of the window. His bedroom being on the second floor, he was killed on the spot; he had just had an attack of a burning fever. His singular head-dress sufficiently proved it, for, imagining that he was dressing himself, he had put on his hat and tied it under his chin with a red handkerchief. This accident made a great noise in the palace. It was attempted to conceal it from the knowledge of Her Majesty, who was, however, informed of it. She settled a pension upon the widow, took charge of the six children, and had them instructed in reading, writing, and other studies.

The cold was so intense at Navarre that every pond and even the cascades were frozen over; the Empress, who was always anxious to provide amusements for the young people about her person, procured from Paris two sledges of elegant construction, which were intended to be drawn along the ice by skaters. We were all eager to enter them together, but as this was quite impossible, and it was wished to content every one, wheels were affixed to large armchairs in order to satisfy our impatience, and I was about to sit in one of them when my mother opposed it, a prohibition which greatly thwarted my impatience, as I was compelled to wait until the ladies who had first got into the sledges should alight. Being thus put

out of temper, I returned to the palace. I had scarcely seated myself in the salon, when M. Bonpland* walked in with a countenance so much disconcerted that it was easy to perceive he was the bearer of unwelcome news. Some piercing shrieks at that moment caught my ear, and we were informed that Mdlle. Avrillon (Josephine's private *femme de chambre*) had just broken her leg in the very arm-chair I had so longed to sit in; one of the wheels had dropped off, and Mdlle. Avrillon, having been upset by the shock, had met with a dangerous fall; the shrieks we had heard were occasioned by her having received two severe fractures. The Empress immediately sent for M. Horeau, who was already by the side of the patient. He came to say that he must first of all set the leg, but he foresaw that the wound would be a very serious one. The Empress sent, in the utmost distress, all the gentlemen of the household, one after the other, to rouse the courage of the patient for that cruel operation, and to announce her intention of visiting her as soon as she could do so without creating too strong an emotion.† She was

* A friend of M. de Humboldt, and celebrated for his medical knowledge; he superintended Her Majesty's greenhouses. He was generally beloved, owing to his mild and unassuming disposition. He is at present in Paraguay; and it is impossible to state when he is likely to be restored to France, to science, and to his friends.

† Her Majesty ordered a mechanical bed from Paris. It was the first I ever saw, and saved the patient from acute sufferings. I am surprised that in provincial towns there should not be one, at least, for every hospital. When may we hope that useful discoveries will be placed within reach of the numerous class of poor people?

aware that her presence had the effect of mitigating the pains of those who were attached to her, and that Mdlle. Avrillon was, more than any one else, entitled to the interest she felt for her.

As soon as the leg was set, Her Majesty quickly ascended a dark, narrow staircase, leading to the patient's bedroom; the latter burst into tears, saying that what most affected her was her being so long without seeing the Empress. "If that is all," replied the Empress, "let your mind be at ease, for I shall come every day to inquire if you have all you stand in need of; and when you have followed the prescriptions of my worthy doctor, I shall remain a long time with you; the length of my visits will be in proportion to the good sense and patience you have shewn." Accordingly, she never missed a day during two months that Mdlle. Avrillon was compelled to remain in the same position. This example was followed by every other person of the household; whenever the doctor allowed it, they relieved each other near the unfortunate patient; her bedroom had become an appendage to the salon. The Viceroy and Queen Hortense also paid regular visits to her. Thus it was that they mitigated the protracted sufferings of this person, who was well deserving of the attentions shewn to her by her devoted attachment to Her Majesty, her natural wit, and her goodness of disposition. I was indebted to her for calming my apprehensions

of appearing at Court, and was, therefore, much afflicted at beholding her painful condition.

Had it not been for my mother's prohibition, which had so much disappointed me, that accident must have happened to myself.

CHAPTER XXV.

M. Spontini Comes to Navarre.—His Operas Are Ill Performed.
— The Emperor Was Not Partial to French Music.—Witty
Trick Played upon the Emperor by Méhul.— Complete
Success of the Opera of “*L’ Irato*.” — MM. Paër, Cimarosa,
Paësiello, Cherubini, and Lesueur.

M. SPONTINI came for a few days on a visit to Navarre.* We had his scores of the operas of the “*Vestale*” and “*Fernand-Cortés*,” which were sung to the best of our abilities. M. de Monaco, who was a good player on the pianoforte, performed for us before M. Spontini’s arrival; he now resigned his place to the composer of the two splendid works which we had been rehearsing. Our timidity in singing in his presence was probably detrimental to the harmony of our voices, but this did not prevent his assuring us, with that frankness *peculiar to Italians*, that we sang to admiration.

* He had dedicated the opera of the “*Vestale*” to the Empress, who gave him a diamond pin of great value, and never failed evincing kindness to him whenever he required her assistance. He was as attentive to her after the divorce as when she was on the throne, and was constant in his attendance as soon as he was relieved from his occupations. She had experienced so much ingratitude that she felt a pleasure in proclaiming M. Spontini’s grateful remembrance of her.

M. de Monaco was only partial to his own music ; he, therefore, agreed that M. Spontini's exaggerated praises were no more than what our talents were entitled to ; they electrified him to such a degree that he sang the chorus with greater energy than usual, and, feeling gradually stimulated by his example, we did not hesitate to follow him ; the whole produced an absolute confusion of sounds. As very few of the *dilettanti* were unemployed, every one felt perfectly self-satisfied ; we accordingly went repeatedly over the same ground, and exhibited a specimen of playing sufficient to afford a thorough disgust of both operas, if it were possible to entertain a dislike for two such masterpieces. Notwithstanding the rage for Rossini's productions, which I only follow at a distance, I will always maintain that the "Vestale" and "Fernand-Cortés" will be enthusiastically admired whenever they are sung by better voices. Many of the works of Paër, Cimarosa, and others would be equally well received, if they were got up with proper care, but according to present notions, Rossini is the only composer deserving of praise. Time will bring on a change in this opinion.

Since I am upon the topic of music, I will repeat an anecdote told by the Empress, and furnish some details on the subject of the celebrated composers with whom circumstances made me acquainted. Whatever concerns the fine arts must be interesting

to a nation which is acknowledged to cultivate them with such brilliant success. This is my motive for briefly interrupting the narrative of occurrences at Navarre.

The Empress was attending, with the Emperor, at the theatre of St. Cloud, a representation of the "*Zingari in Fiera*," of Paësiello, who was in Their Majesties' box. A splendid air of Cimarosa had been introduced into this opera.

Napoleon, who was passionately fond of Italian music, which he was desirous of again bringing into fashion, was in ecstasy at every passage, and complimented Paësiello in terms the more flattering as the person who uttered them was very sparing of such expressions. At last, at the conclusion of the passage I have alluded to, the Emperor turned round, and, grasping Paësiello's hand,—

"My good friend," he exclaimed, "the man who lays claim to this tune may safely call himself the greatest composer in Europe."

"It belongs to Cimarosa," faintly uttered Paësiello.

"I am sorry for it, but I cannot recall what I have said."

In order to make up for the disappointment he had just occasioned, the Emperor, who greatly prized the talents of Paësiello, and was very partial to him, sent him the next morning a splendid present. I doubt, however, whether he succeeded in the object he had

in view. An author's self-love is generally more powerful than his love of money; and the honours which he received will not have effaced the recollection of the cruel expressions of the preceding day.

During his stay in Paris, Paësiello often went to the house of Madame de Montesson, where I met him. A young lady of the company, who was considered as having an admirable talent for singing, made a display of her vocal powers on a certain occasion when he was present. She affected great pretensions in performing the difficult passages of that celebrated composer, and was greatly applauded. Her admirers, moreover, feeling desirous of conveying to her the praises of Paësiello, came up to him in the expectation of his gratifying their wishes. Astonished at his silence, they questioned him respecting the merits of Mdle. ———.

“She has very fine eyes.”

“No doubt; but do you not think she has a delightful voice?”

“They are very expressive.”

“Assuredly so; but what do you think of her method of singing?”

“I never saw finer eyes.”

In vain they attempted to force him from the topic, and the disconcerted amateurs no longer ventured to express such extravagant enthusiasm when listening to the voice of Mdle. ———.

Paësiello reported that there were a hundred requisites for singing—ninety-nine times a good voice and one correct method. How many there are who possess no such requisites and yet fancy they sing well!

He had a handsome, dignified, and expressive countenance. He felt an inward conviction of his superior talent, which was not then contested with him; but he spoke of it with so candid a pride that he almost led me to forgive him. Others, with less claim to distinction, are swelled with vanity, and although they affect to conceal it, are the more insupportable in their disguise. They confine themselves to the task of running down every one else. I prefer those who openly praise themselves, and at the same time do justice to others. Such was Paësiello's character. He was of opinion that *he* composed in a *superior* style, and that many others acquitted themselves *well*. This is allowing more than what an ordinary talent is disposed to concede.

The failure of the opera of "Proserpine," which contained, however, some fine passages, was a severe blow to his fame. The Emperor was outrageous at this failure, and repeatedly said that the French were no judges of music. He was displeased that his *protégé* should not succeed, and that others should not fall in with his taste. That opera, notwithstanding the great expense incurred, its pretty ballets, and splendid scenes, had only a short run. The Govern-

ment persisted in ordering the performance of it, and the public in keeping away. It was found necessary to give it up. Paësiello felt disgusted with France, and determined to return to Italy.

His situation as Master of the Imperial Chapel became vacant by his resignation, and Napoleon felt desirous of appointing a man worthy of replacing him. He fixed upon Méhul, with whom he had been intimately acquainted long before the expedition to Egypt. His choice was equally commendable on the score of talent, of wit, and of personal character. Everything led to believe that Méhul would be anxious to accept the proposal. Great, therefore, was the Emperor's astonishment when he received a formal refusal.

"I can only accept the place," said Méhul to him, "on condition that you will allow me to share it with my friend Cherubini."

"Never mention him; he is a man of a snappish disposition; and I have an utter aversion for him."

"It is certainly his misfortune, general, to have failed in securing your good opinion; but in point of sacred music he is superior to us all; he is straitened in his circumstances, has a numerous family, and I should feel happy in reconciling you to him."

"I repeat that I will not have him."

"In that case, general, I must positively decline; nothing can alter my determination. I belong to the

Institute, he does not. I will not allow it to be said that I take advantage of the kindness you shew me, in order to secure every place for myself, and deprive a celebrated man of what he is so justly entitled to claim at your hands."

Méhul persisted in his resolution, and Napoleon remained inflexible; he, therefore, commissioned the Empress to look out for a composer whose talents might be equal to the situation which he had intended for Méhul. Josephine mentioned the circumstance to Madame de Montesson, who earnestly recommended to her notice M. Lesueur, whose merit was not sufficiently appreciated; he could not succeed in procuring his opera of the "Bardes" to be acted; he was, withal, extremely poor. Ever anxious to relieve misfortune, Josephine spoke to the First Consul in the highest terms of M. Lesueur, who was appointed to the situation. His opera was performed, and had a complete success.

When Napoleon was only a general of brigade he made some observations to Cherubini respecting his style of music, which the general, with some colour of justice, considered too scientific and deficient in melody.

"General," replied Cherubini, quite enraged, "attend to your trade of winning battles and leave me to mine, of which you know nothing."

This retort greatly offended Napoleon, who never could forgive it.

Cherubini was unable to obtain any place during his reign; his untractable character prevented his adopting any steps for removing the prejudice entertained against him by the ruler of the world. He felt pleased at having nettled him; and almost quarrelled with Méhul, whom he often accused of being an intriguer — an accusation which was perfectly unjust, since the latter had refused on his account a lucrative and honourable appointment. Cherubini remained for many years in the utmost distress, wholly through his own fault.

One is at a loss to conceive that the Emperor should have been so much vexed at an abrupt reply made to him, and yet that he should not only have forgiven to Méhul a kind of trick of which he was himself the dupe, but have continued to retain a sincere regard for him.

At the period when “Ariodant,” “Euphrosine,” and “Stratonice” were most in vogue, the Consul incessantly repeated to Méhul that his productions were, no doubt, excellent, but that they contained no songs at all to be compared with those of the Italian masters. “You always give us scientific compositions over and over again, my dear Méhul, but as for gracefulness and pleasing melody, you Frenchmen can as little pretend to it as the Germans.” Méhul gave no reply, but went in quest of his friend Marsollier, and requested he would compose for him a short lively

act, the sketch of which might be sufficiently absurd to justify its being ascribed to a poet *de libretto*. He enjoined him at the same time the most profound secrecy.

Marsollier having full confidence in the talent and wit of his friend, set himself to work, and wrote the opera of "*L'Irato*" in a very short space of time. He took it to Méhul, who immediately composed the charming music of it, which is still enthusiastically applauded at the present day. Marsollier repaired to the committee of the theatre of the Opéra Comique, stated his having received from Italy the score of an opera, the music of which was so delightful that he was confident of success, notwithstanding the insipidity of the poem, which he had been at the trouble of translating from the Italian original. (Care had been taken to get the part copied by an unknown hand.) The actors were all attention, felt delighted with the composition, and anxious to get up the opera. They contended with each other for the distribution of the characters, and all the papers announced with much emphasis that an *admirable*, an *enchanteing* opera from an Italian composer would shortly be performed. The first representation was announced. The Consul expressed his intention of attending it, and prevailed upon Méhul to accompany him. "It will be a heart-breaking mortification for you, my poor friend; but, perhaps, when you are listening to those airs, so very

different from what the modern school produces, you will recover from your fancy *odd* compositions." Méhul pretended to be disappointed at what Bonaparte was telling him, and refused to go to the theatre; the former still insisted, and he at last gave way.

At the very overture of the opera the Emperor began to applaud; every part was charming, true to nature, full of grace and vivacity; his praises were incessant, and he constantly repeated these words: "Unquestionably *the Italian music is the only good one.*" The opera concluded in the midst of loud acclamations, and the authors were enthusiastically called for. Martin came to ask Marsollier if he wished to be named as the translator. "Certainly not," replied the latter, "but as author of the words; and you will announce at the same time that the music is Méhul's composition." The whole audience was lost in astonishment, for the secret had been so well kept that none of the actors had any suspicion of the truth. The curtain drew up, the three customary bows were made, and the names of the authors were proclaimed, and drowned in general plaudits. The Consul adopted the only sensible course; he had enjoyed himself, was pleased with what he had heard, and shewed no signs of anger.

"Deceive me always in this way," said he to Méhul, "and I shall rejoice at it as much for my own satisfaction."

This anecdote was related to me by Méhul himself, who always delighted in the recollection of Napoleon's astonishment, and of the kind of hesitation which his countenance exhibited, previously to uttering the compliment he had received from him.

This celebrated composer, who was so soon torn from science and from the endearments of friendship, yielded to none in the charms of his conversation. Serious and lively by turns, he related with an equal felicity of diction the most tragical stories and the most lively anecdotes. In the succeeding chapter I will relate one of which he was the subject; it had left an indelible impression on his memory, and he still enjoyed it in the company of his friends. I shall also notice the worthy old Monsigny, whom I frequently met, and could not fail to be delighted with, for all those qualities which constitute a good and amiable man were found combined in his character.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Méhul at Givet, His Native Town. — Singular Fête Given to Him. — Monsigny. — Grétry.

MÉHUL was a native of Givet; as his family was settled in that town, he performed several journeys to visit them; his fellow townsmen, proud of the celebrity he had acquired, determined to offer him a fête on his next visit. They concerted together beforehand, in order that nothing should be wanting to the solemnity which they designed to give to this mark of respect for a superior talent, and for a man of estimable qualities.

Méhul had scarcely arrived when he was waited upon by a deputation of *amateurs*, who requested he would attend a representation which was to be given on the following day at the theatre, where his works were performed, so they said, with surprising harmony, for a company of strolling players. “There is no knowing,” added the deputation, “what the presence of your genius may effect.” Méhul felt surprised that his music could be performed indifferently well with the aid of such scanty means, and he promised to comply with the wishes of his townsmen.

Large placards were posted up in every street on the following day, with a pompous and lengthy announcement that the inhabitants of Givet, feeling desirous of testifying their admiration for M. Méhul, would give in the evening the opera called "*Une Folie*," to be succeeded by an entertainment, and the crowning of the great composer's bust. Méhul came to the theatre attended by every person of note in the town. He was placed in a kind of niche, dignified by the name of box, and ornamented with a figured tapestry of old standing, and with garlands of paper flowers. He was greeted with bursts of applause on his appearance, and had scarcely sat down when the curtain drew up. An actor came forward to the balustrade, and recited verses which alluded to the happiness of possessing so distinguished a spectator, whose indulgence he solicited, and announced that the opera of "*Une Folie*" was about to begin; but that, as it was impossible to procure musicians, *every piece of music would be passed over*. They, accordingly, performed the *comedy* of M. Bouilly, by way of a treat to Méhul.

The remainder of the evening was in perfect keeping with its commencement. The bust intended to be crowned was made of clay; and, with a view to render the likeness still more striking, the nose had been lengthened beyond measure, in order that it should appear to be in due proportion when seen at a

distance. An actress, whilst endeavouring to place the crown of laurel on this apology for a head, had the misfortune to come in contact with its enormous nose, which fell to the ground, and it became necessary to replace it with the assistance of a black pin. These untoward accidents did not prevent the newspaper of the following day from trumpeting forth the excellent order of the *splendid* fête given by the town to the celebrated Méhul, and noticing the enthusiasm it had excited, taking care not to omit mentioning how much he was affected at receiving an homage of so flattering a nature. The fact is that his risible faculties were kept in a state of constant excitement, and he had no other means of concealing his laughter than by holding a handkerchief to his face; this led to the supposition that he was deeply affected, and did him the highest honour, in the opinion of the elegant ladies of Givet.

Méhul was universally liked, and was known in society as the *worthy Méhul*. He was ready to do justice to the talents of every one, even his enemies, and shewed a constant attachment to his friends, to whom he frequently afforded pecuniary assistance. As he was a regular and punctual man, he always found the means of having money at command for the purpose of assisting those who were in want. He took upon himself the charge of defraying the education of one of his nephews, M. Daussoigne,

who did not exhibit for him that kindness to which he had so just a claim.

It was the fate of M. Méhul to be unhappy in his domestic circle. Having married an agreeable woman, he naturally looked forward to happiness, but she rewarded his affection by the deepest ingratitude, deserted him some years previous to his death, and only returned a month before he expired. He frankly forgave her the sorrows she had entailed upon him since their marriage, and left her the whole of his fortune, with the exception of some legacies which he bequeathed to his family and to a few friends who had afforded him every consolation during his long and painful illness.

I was also very intimate with Monsigny, who first set the example of altering the system of the theatre of the *Italian comedy*, where, before his time, the only performances were ballads and broad farces, which it required all the talent of Carlin to keep in vogue.

Monsigny's works were attended with the most complete success; and when we consider the time at which they were composed, we are forced to acknowledge that they must have possessed great intrinsic merit. Elleviou restored many of them to the stage; and by the fascination of his voice and his excellent acting, he clothed them in all the attraction of novelty. The music now appears

extremely weak, and there is a total absence of harmony ; nevertheless, we discover in "Felix" some delightful songs. This opera was the last of his compositions that was acted on the stage. He no sooner attended the performances of Grétry than he relinquished the career he had opened in so brilliant a manner. He possessed great simplicity of character, and told us that, finding that Grétry would crush him by his superiority, he had preferred withdrawing from the scene. Notwithstanding their being rivals, they always remained on friendly terms. In the decline of life, they frequently met, and invariably accosted each other in these words :

" Good-morning to you, sir," said Grétry.

" Peace be with you," replied Monsigny.

" Monsieur, all are not competent to compose melody."

" Who knows that better than I do ?"

These two Nestors of music cordially shook hands and parted until the next interview, which was an exact repetition of the preceding one.

Monsigny had married a young lady extremely addicted to devotion. On one occasion, when he went to do duty at Villers-Cotterets, the residence of the Duc d'Orléans, where he acted as steward, his young wife consigned to the flames three works fully completed, in order to prevent her husband from having any further intercourse with the stage. It is very

possible that they were superior in merit to his earlier performances.

Napoleon was one day at the theatre when the "Deserter" was performed. He was so pleased with it that he asked M. Picard, who was in his box, what was the name of the composer. Being informed that the author of the music had been wholly ruined by the Revolution, and that he had nothing more to depend upon for himself and his family than a small pension made to him by the comedians of the Théâtre Fey-deau, he granted him one of 6,000 francs, and appointed him a Knight of the Legion of Honour. He was also a member of the Institute.

He was greatly advanced in years at the time of the King's return, and lived quite retired from the world; notwithstanding this circumstance, he was appointed a Knight of Saint Michael. He was unable, however, to enjoy this favour of his Sovereign; the ribbon, which so honourably attested the esteem felt by Louis XVIII. for his talent and his personal character, was received at his house at the moment of his quitting a life exempt from reproach. That decoration was deposited upon his coffin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A Distressed Musician Comes to Navarre.—The Empress Listens to Him.—Portrait of This Man.—Reproof Given by the Empress.

I RETURN at last to Navarre. If I have too long wandered from my subject, I have been carried away by the pleasure I felt in adverting to a few celebrated characters. I crave the indulgence of my readers for the absence of arrangement in my narrative; but I should feel it impossible to assume so much command over myself as to take time for reflection and present an agreeable recital of events; I note them down such as they occur to my memory, and follow the impulsion of my ideas. As it never entered into my contemplation to become a writer, it was out of my power to methodise the plan of a literary work. I repeat that I have not taken up my pen with the view to shine in the character of an authoress, but merely to give a fairer description than has hitherto been presented of several historical personages with whom I have been in habitual intercourse.

I must, therefore, be excused my constant rambles, out of consideration for my desire to exhibit some

elevated characters to public admiration ; it is with regret that I ever mention the names of those for whom I entertain no esteem ; but I owe it to that adherence to truth to which I have pledged myself ; it will occasionally be painful to my feelings to abide by this engagement ; were I, however, to disguise the truth on some points, I should justly expose myself to be doubted on others ; I shall, therefore, as little conceal what is wrong as omit noticing what is praiseworthy. I now revert to my favourite subject, and again turn my exclusive attention to Josephine.

A poor musician sent to solicit leave to perform *by himself* a quartetto in the presence of the Empress. He announced his intention of imitating the voices of four different actors in such a manner as to produce a complete illusion. Her Majesty consented to hear him the same night.

He came at the appointed time, and his grotesque appearance created a general mirth. His black sur-tout nearly grown white from age, a waistcoat embroidered with coloured silk, a wretched sword of rusty steel, buckles ornamented with false stones, an enormous frill, which bore the marks of former plaiting ; such was his toilet. An uncombed greasy head, a large red nose, small squinting eyes, and bandy legs, formed his external appearance. He stood before us with his arms crossed over, with his hands under his elbows to conceal the ravages occasioned by

their constant rubbing, and with his feet turned outwards. I own that I enjoyed more than any one this ludicrous caricature.

Her Majesty maintained a grave composure, asked him several questions respecting his native country, *the peculiar character of his talent*, to which he replied in appropriate and measured terms, which did not much accord with his singular appearance.

He called for a folding screen, and, placing himself behind it, he began the expected quartetto. No common ballad-singer ever cut a more ridiculous figure. Josephine's gravity kept for a long time our risible propensity in check; but he no sooner assumed a tone of voice resembling a flute, for the purpose of imitating Madame Barilli, than we were unable to contain ourselves, and broke out into loud bursts of laughter, calculated to disconcert the poor musician, who, nevertheless, continued his performance.

The Empress came up to him with an air full of dignity, and assured him that she was very well satisfied; his imitation was perfectly correct, as he must have discovered by the hilarity of the company. She ordered supper for him, of which I believe he stood greatly in want, and desired that ten napoleons should be given to him. "Ladies, you are very young," she said to us, "and you may be excused for laughing at ridiculous things wherever you find them; with respect to myself, I should have been exceedingly

unhappy could anything else have struck my attention except the extreme wretchedness of this poor man, who took so much pains to please me at a time when he was dying with hunger." Never was any lesson conveyed with greater gentleness, or more deserved; never did any produce a deeper impression; for my part, I was so deeply affected by it that I could have shed tears of sorrow at having joined in the sport.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ball Given on Occasion of the Marriage of Princess Stephanie of Baden. — I Am Invited to It. — Various Expressions of the Emperor. — Mesdames Charpentier, Simon, Chat——. — The Princess of Ponte-Corvo. — Reply of Her Father, M. Clari. — Strange Revenge of Girodet. — Pension Granted to My Father. — The Prince de Léon.

THE Empress recalled to my memory the two occasions on which I had spoken to the Emperor, and reproached me very justly with not having taken advantage of them to solicit some favour for my family; my apprehension of doing so was owing to the following cause:

Several persons who had it in their power to obtain a place for my father, wishing to avoid the trouble of asking, persuaded us that Napoleon entertained the *most bitter* prejudice against him; and that care ought to be taken not to mention his name before His Majesty. We had long been familiar with misfortunes, and easily gave credit to whatever was calculated to increase our depression of mind; so far, therefore, from endeavouring to remove this pretended prejudice, we resigned ourselves to carry on our existence

by means of a scanty pension made to us by an aunt, which was scarcely adequate to our support.

My father would not have accepted of any place at Court; his openness of character recoiled at acting the part of a Royalist courtier. Having long suffered for the cause which had cost him his fortune, he never would consent to be numbered among the glittering followers of the Emperor; but I have no doubt that he would have shewn every disposition to hold any employment where he might have been of service to his country, to which he was anxious to bestow the advantage of an experience acquired by long application to study, and the severest trials of fortune. The first wish of every honourable man is to be of use to his native country; all party opinions give way to the consideration of being able to promote its glory or its happiness. Feeling persuaded, however, that he could never have access to any place that was suitable to him, he constantly kept at a distance from the reigning power.

At the period of the marriage of Princess Stephanie of Baden, my mother and I were invited to the ball given at the Tuileries. It was necessary to appear in full dress, a circumstance which prevented my mother from accepting the invitation; unwilling, however, to deprive me of the enjoyment of a fête which so greatly excited my curiosity, she confided me to the care of one of our female relations, with a request

that she would not mention who I was if the Emperor should chance to ask my name. The extreme simplicity of my dress, which formed a contrast with the brilliancy of others, and my youthful appearance, attracted the attention of the Sovereign, who came up to me ; my whole frame shook with apprehension — a weakness peculiar to me on every extraordinary occasion. My mind instantly recollected all that had been said to me of the Emperor's antipathy for my father, and I dreaded some of those abrupt expressions to which one was often exposed at such fêtes. Fortunately, Napoleon only spoke to me of dancing — paid me a flattering compliment, to which I acutely replied, giving him the appellation of *Monsieur !*

Turning to the lady next to me,—

“What is your name ?” he asked.

“Sire, I am Madame Charpentier.”

“The general's wife ?”

“Yes, Sire.”

“This ball dress does not become you. You are very much altered.”

The next lady was distinguished by her remarkable beauty, and a profusion of diamonds. The Emperor appeared struck with her, and asked, with a smile :

“What is your name, madame ?”

“Sire,” she replied with an affected air, “I am Madame Simon.”

“Very true,” said the Emperor, “I recollect . . .” And he left her, in an immoderate fit of laughter.

This Madame Simon was well known by the name of Mdle. Lange, when an actress at the Comédie Française. Her handsome features had captivated M. Simon, a wealthy coach-maker, and afterwards a banker, who married her. Napoleon had a retentive memory; he probably recollected the story of the famous portrait painted by Girodet,* which was the occasion of his laughing when he heard her name mentioned.

It was at this ball that Napoleon proved so ungrate-

* Girodet had painted a striking likeness of Madame Simon, who did not consider it sufficiently handsome. M. Simon bargained about the price, and refused to take the picture. The celebrated artist, feeling satisfied that he had copied nature as closely as it was possible to do, determined to be revenged for the injustice done to him. He altered several accessories to the figure, retained its reclining attitude, added a golden shower falling upon it, and placed in the foreground an enormous turkey cock proudly contemplating the charms of its beautiful Danaë. This painting was exhibited for two days in the salon. Every one recognized Madame Simon, who immediately sent to request that Girodet would return her the portrait, which she would pay for at any price he might think proper to demand. The painter's revenge was gratified, and he declined her offer; but he promised to conceal his work from the public gaze, and he kept his word. I believe that at his death it came into the possession of Charpentier, his pupil. M. Simon having failed some years ago, his wife sold all her jewels, even those which she possessed before her marriage, in order to meet the claims of his creditors. This conduct is the more praiseworthy as it has never been *noticed in the newspapers*. Madame Simon is living in great distress in a fifth story; she was said to be an excellent woman. This is clearly proved by the circumstance of her having preserved many sincere friends who help her to bear with the sudden change from the most splendid condition to a very precarious existence.

ful to Madame de Chat——, who had proved of the utmost service to him when he was no more than a lieutenant of artillery. Possessing nothing beyond his pay, he was forced to lead a life of privations, and was very often unable to provide the most indispensable wants. Madame de Chat——, who was much attached to him, adopted a variety of ways for supplying him with what he stood in need of; she offered him an apartment in her own house, and persuaded him that he was rendering her a service in accepting the offer, by alleging that the furniture was spoiling for want of being exposed to the air. She told him she had an utter aversion to taking her meals alone, and that if her society was not too irksome to him, she would be very happy to profit by his being in her neighbourhood, which would afford her the advantage of having some one to take share of her meals. In a word, she proved for a long time a most serviceable friend to him.

Her fortune was irretrievably ruined some time after Bonaparte's elevation to power; she frequently wrote to request he would afford her the means of repairing it, but her letters remained unanswered. Being apprised that a ball would be given for the marriage of the Emperor's adopted daughter, and fancying that he would on that occasion be more favourably disposed than usual towards her, she exerted every endeavour to obtain an invitation, in the hope of

handing in a petition, and of having some conversation with the Emperor. She felt apprehensive that her letters were intercepted by some secret enemy, and conceived it to be impossible that the signal services she had rendered could ever be forgotten. She stationed herself in the Gallery of Diana, on His Majesty's passage, and presented to him, with a trembling hand, the petition upon which depended her future fate. The Emperor fixed his looks upon her, his countenance darkened, and he broke out in these words :

“How came you to my residence?”

The unhappy woman heard no more, she fainted, and it was found necessary to remove her. It is said that she received on the following morning the order for a pension of 1,200 francs. Why, then, make her purchase at so dear a price what was no more than a debt of gratitude which he owed to that lady?

Nothing could exceed the splendour of the ball or the elegance of the quadrilles; each lady had a complete set of jewels lent to her by the Princess, who led the quadrille, and the gentlemen's caps were looped with large diamonds. The Grand Duchess of Berg (Madame Murat) was more particularly remarked by splendour of her brilliant and tasteful toilet. Her dress was spangled with diamond bees, her band, her necklace, and the diamond aigrettes of her toque, were invaluable.

I was for an hour near the Princess of Pontecorvo, now Queen of Sweden. She criticised and ridiculed everything, and appeared in very ill humour, a circumstance which surprised me the more, as every one appeared pleased and contented at that elegant fête. I inquired the cause of it from Madame de B——, who told me that Madame Bernadotte was inconsolable at not having been married to the Emperor. He had solicited her hand a few months after Joseph's marriage. M. Clari, not being over-satisfied with the match of his eldest daughter, had replied with harshness *that he had got quite enough with one Bonaparte in his family*. Out of so many conquered thrones, only one is now in existence, and Madame Bernadotte wears the royal crown. Strange has been her destiny!

I spoke to the Emperor on another occasion in the forest of Fontainebleau, where I had gone to see the hunt. He shewed me the greatest kindness, inquired what I wanted, and appeared much astonished that I should merely request to be allowed to speak of the distribution of the spoils. I was as apprehensive as at the Tuileries of making the least request on behalf of my family, being always persuaded that the prejudice so repeatedly mentioned to me was not altogether imaginary, though it had, in reality, such little existence that His Majesty granted to my father, some time afterwards, a pension of a thousand crowns,

which he had in no manner solicited. M. Chaptal, having mentioned our name in presence of the Emperor, was questioned respecting my father's talents, and the Emperor being satisfied with the answers given to him, ordered a pension of three thousand francs to be paid to him by monthly instalments, raised from the revenue of the newspapers.

Had I been possessed of more courage, I might have had the good fortune to render the situation of my parents as comfortable as it was painful. I regretted for a long time having missed such opportunities, and am only consoled by the certainty of the mortification my father would have experienced at my having made any attempt, as he was forced to espouse a party in 1814. To betray his benefactor, or to renounce the Bourbons, whom he had faithfully served, and to whom he was strongly attached, would have been a most cruel alternative for his feelings. Providence spared him the grief of making such a choice. He was nothing at the time of the return of the family in whose behalf he had quitted his native land, and had been involved in ruin; they neglected to employ him, all those who were accustomed to favours having rushed into the antechambers of the Ministers, and pounced upon every place. Nothing except the Court dress had been altered at the Tuileries; the same persons held possession of the same places, and this gave rise to a witty expression of the

Prince de Léon, who had held no place under the Emperor. Happening to be in the King's salon with Prince Berthier, the latter spoke of their mutual attachment to the Royal Family :

“There is, nevertheless, a remarkable difference between us,” replied M. de Léon ; “your attachment is that of cats *to a house* ; mine is that of a dog *to the person of his master*.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

M. de Chambaudoin, Prefect of Evreux. — Dinner Given by Him. — Singular Table Ornament. — Adventure in the Forest. — Portrait of Its Hero. — His Costume. — Madame de Montg——. — Indifference Shewn by the Empress.

M. DE CHAMBAUDOIN, the Prefect of Evreux, invited us to a grand dinner; we all accepted the invitation. The service was splendid, and the table ornament delightful. An immense glass plateau was covered with handsome vases filled with artificial flowers. M. de Portalès, with that politeness so natural to him, drew the attention of the company to the elegance of the table, adding that it was no doubt due to the taste of Madame de Chambaudoin.

“You are quite right, Count,” replied the Prefect. “I am, in fact, indebted to Minette” (the name he always gave his wife) “for everything you see. She brought me the vases from Italy; she sends me every summer the flowers that have decorated her during winter. *Ses pensées sont toutes pour moi*,”* added the Prefect, pointing at a bunch of those flowers.

* The French word *pensée* has a double signification — viz., the flower called heartsease, and thought. — *Translator*.

This witty saying, which was in such exquisite good taste, was received with a smile of satisfaction.

We looked at each other with surprise at being made the confidantes of those domestic details, and M. de Portalès said that the idea of seeing in each nosegay a *handful of hair* had taken away his appetite. This observation afforded us a fresh subject of merriment at the expense of the Prefect, who was indebted for his place to no other cause than Madame de Chambaudoin's being in the good graces of Josephine and Queen Hortense. I was never acquainted with her, as the education of her daughter required her presence in Paris. Her amenity of temper, the amiability of her well-cultivated mind, and her unassuming disposition, were the theme of general praise.

Some days after that dinner, Mesdames Gazani, de Castellane, and de Mackau expressed a wish to take a walk in the forest of Evreux. For my part, I never had a relish for walking, and always found great insipidity in a promenade without an object. I felt much greater comfort in driving out in an elegant calash, and declined being of the proposed excursion. I went with the Empress, according to my custom, and we returned at an early hour. I inquired if the ladies had returned from their excursion, and was answered in the negative.

Their continued absence created some uneasiness in the palace. Messengers were sent in various direc-

tions after them, under the apprehension of their having lost their way. At last they made their appearance, exhausted with fatigue, but delighted at a discovery they had made, which was, as they said, a perfectly romantic adventure. Anxious to learn the details of it, we all questioned them at once, and they related to us that, having lost their way, they had descried a small house surrounded with a flower garden, which was tended with the greatest care. Being unable to find out their way, they entered this pleasing retreat, which had never been mentioned at the palace, and which we had never discovered in our rambles. They were politely ushered by a servant into the salon, where they met a very pleasing, well-dressed lady, who was seated on a couch, and held in her arms a lovely child who was playing with a younger infant, in a kneeling attitude before its mother.

The strangers were struck with astonishment at beholding this picture, and the unknown lady appeared surprised at receiving the visit of three females of such remarkable beauty. They put to each other a variety of questions, — young people are of communicative dispositions, — the conversation was, therefore, very animated, nevertheless, the recluse answered with great reserve. She expressed her regret to those ladies at being unable to offer them the guidance of *her husband*, who was in Paris since

the preceding day. She directed her *femme de chambre* to shew the ladies the shortest road to Navarre; and, after helping them to some excellent milk and fruit, she conducted the handsome wanderers to the distance of a few hundred paces from her habitation. All children soon take a liking, especially to pleasing countenances, and the infants clung to the dresses of their *friends*, and wished to go along with them to see the Empress *who distributed bread to the poor, and playthings to well-behaved children.*

Madame Gazani said she was certain Her Majesty would be delighted to learn that she had such a neighbour, and would no doubt invite her to come to the palace. The young lady replied with great courtesy, but with no less reserve, and did not invite the strangers to repeat their visit.

This meeting was the exclusive topic of conversation during dinner. The Empress promised to have inquiries made, and to invite that interesting family to her palace.

She learned on the following day that the house in question had been purchased by the family who then resided in it, and who received no company whatever; it was supposed that the lady was unhappy, as she had been twice seen shedding tears in the forest. Her Majesty sent to invite M. ——— to dine with her.

We fancied that he could not be otherwise than handsome, witty, and amiable, since he had thus cap-

tivated a female whom those ladies represented to be extremely well educated; her conversation was fascinating; and she was supposed to be musical, as a harp had been seen in the salon close to a frame upon which was placed the rough sketch of a painting. We each pictured to ourselves this engaging hero, and impatiently expected his appearance. He had accepted Her Majesty's invitation; our curiosity would, therefore, be gratified in a very few days. Madame Gazani, in particular, was eager to become acquainted with the man whom the *beauty of the forest* (this was the name we gave her as being more romantic than Madame M——) had often called the *most engaging of his sex*. Our disappointment will readily be imagined when we beheld a corpulent man, pitted with the smallpox, with his hair combed over his forehead, and an appearance, the vulgarity of which was greatly augmented by a sky-blue coat and chased buttons. We at first imagined that the Empress had sent for another person in order to deceive us, and we laughed heartily at the caricature he had assumed; nevertheless, Madame d'Arberg and M. de Beaumont assured us in so serious a manner that he was the very man we were so anxious to see, that we could no longer have any doubt upon the subject.

Our surprise was at its height when we learnt that he had already inspired a violent passion in Madame de Montg——, one of the most celebrated women

of our time. She had married him ; but this gay deceiver had proved faithless to his vows ; he carried off the young woman I have lately mentioned, whom he passed off for his wife ; and she was so deeply enamoured of him as to refuse returning to the bosom of her family, who were ready to forgive her past frailty if she would consent to renounce the guilty connection.

M. ——— was a well-informed man ; but this circumstance does not diminish my surprise at his having turned the brains of two such remarkable women. He confessed all the foregoing details to the Empress, who was urging him to bring his wife to see her ; as soon as Her Majesty was informed of the scandal of his conduct, she treated him so coldly that he never returned to the palace.

CHAPTER XXX.

Superstition of the Empress.—Prediction Made to Her at Martinico.—M. de Beauharnais.—The Duchesse D'Aiguillon.—The Death of Robespierre Is Strangely Announced to the Prisoners.—M. Guillotin.—His Regret.

THE Empress was superstitiously inclined, though much less so than has been reported. She was averse, it is true, to any conversation in her presence on the subject of predictions, as an unhappy end had been foretold to her. Nevertheless, she consented to gratify our anxiety to be correctly informed of what had been predicted to herself at Martinico. The following is her account of it:

Whilst she was yet unmarried, she saw in one of her walks several slaves collected round an old woman, who was telling their fortune; she stopped to listen to her. The sorceress, on perceiving her, uttered a piercing shriek, grasped Mdlle. de Tascher's hand, and appeared greatly agitated.

The latter laughed at her grimaces, and allowed her to proceed.

"Do you perceive, then, anything extraordinary in my countenance?"

"I do."

“Do you discover in it the traces of future happiness or misfortune?”

“Of misfortune, unquestionably, but of happiness, also.”

“You do not commit yourself, my worthy sibyl; your oracles are by no means clear.”

“I could not venture to make them more so,” said the woman, raising her eyes to heaven, with a remarkable expression of countenance.

“Tell me, however, what future prospects you predict to me?” said Josephine, whose curiosity was now awakened.

“You ask what I predict! You will not credit me if I speak out.”

“I will, indeed. Now, my good woman, tell me what am I to hope or to fear?”

“You insist; listen, then, to what I have to say! You will shortly be married; this will be an unhappy union for you; you will become a widow, and afterwards . . . you will be *Queen of France*; you will enjoy many years of happiness, but you will be killed in a popular commotion.”

So saying, the woman forced herself away from the crowd that surrounded her, and hurried away as fast as her advanced age would permit.

Josephine would not allow this pretended sorceress to be laughed at for her *ridiculous prediction*; she laid great stress upon the absurdity of what she had just

"You have written to me, and I have read it. I have been
very much interested."

"I have been very much interested, and I have been
very much interested."

"I have been very much interested, and I have been
very much interested."

"I have been very much interested, and I have been
very much interested."

"I have been very much interested, and I have been
very much interested."

"I have been very much interested, and I have been
very much interested."

"I have been very much interested, and I have been
very much interested."

Napoleon.

Photo-etching after painting by Isabey.



heard, in order to prove to the young negro women what little credit she gave to it, and she never mentioned the matter to her family otherwise than as a joke.

Nothing, in fact, was more improbable at that time than the bare possibility of the political convulsions we have witnessed. Mdlle. de Tascher was destined in all appearance to marry a Creole, and pass the remainder of her days in her native island.

She forgot the whole story until the moment of her losing her first husband, M. de Beauharnais, to whom she was deeply attached. He gave her many serious causes for jealousy, of which she at first complained, with gentleness; finding that so far from altering his conduct, he pretended a violent passion for the woman who interfered with her happiness, Madame de Beauharnais infused into her reproaches a degree of bitterness which completely alienated the affections of a husband she was anxious to bring round. Both parties obstinately refused to yield to each other, and a separation became necessary. The Revolution happened, and M. de Beauharnais was arrested. When she heard of his being in prison she forgot all her wrongs, and resorted to every possible means of mitigating the hardship of his situation. He was deeply penetrated with the nobleness of her conduct, and wrote many affecting letters to her, recommending his children to her maternal attentions. He greatly

regretted the absence of his brother,* who might have been a guide to the wife he had so much injured; his last thoughts, in short, were bestowed upon the partner of his existence.

She was also thrown into prison, and was there informed of the dreadful death of M. de Beauharnais.

“In spite of myself,” she said to us, “I was constantly dwelling upon the prediction made to me; and the idea having thus grown habitual to my mind, I found less absurdity than heretofore in what had been told to me, and almost ended by considering it quite natural.

“The gaoler came one morning into the room where I slept with the Duchesse d’Aiguillon† and two other ladies, and said he came to remove my hammock, which was to be given away to another prisoner.

“‘Why give it away?’ hastily said Madame d’Ai-

* M. de Beauharnais was worthy of his brother’s tender affection for him; though they held opposite opinions, nothing could shake their mutual attachment. They both followed a different course of politics with an uprightness and sincerity of character from which they never deviated. M. de Beauharnais, the brother-in-law of the Empress, remained devotedly attached to her, and she retained a friendship for him which death alone interrupted. He has filled important situations with as much talent as disinterestedness. Courted by old men, who find in him the exquisite politeness and manners of the ancient Court, he is no less the delight of young men, who are sure to be welcomed with kindness and indulgence. His character combines all those qualities which captivate in society, where he is at all times cheerful, witty, and obliging.

† Afterwards Comtesse Louis de Girardin.

guillon; 'you intend, of course, to provide Madame de Beauharnais with a better one?'

"Not at all, she will have no occasion for it,' replied the wretch, with an atrocious smile, 'since she is about to be summoned to the conciergerie, and from thence to the guillotine.'

"On hearing this, my companions in misfortune uttered the most piercing shrieks. I was endeavouring to console them to the best of my power; tired at last with their increasing lamentations, I told them that their grief was quite unreasonable, that not only I should escape death, but should become *Queen of France*.

"Why do you not name at once the persons of your household?' angrily retorted Madame d'Aiguillon.

"Very true, I had quite forgotten it; well, then, my dear friend, I shall appoint you my Lady of Honour, depend upon it.'

"The tears of those ladies now flowed more copiously than before, for they thought me raving mad when they saw my composure in that dreadful moment. I can assure you, ladies, that this was no pretended courage on my part; I was fully persuaded that the oracle would be realized.

"Madame d'Aiguillon grew faint, and I led her towards the window, which I threw open that she might breathe the fresh air; I suddenly caught sight

of a poor woman who was making signs to us, which we could not understand. She was laying hold of her gown at every moment, and we were still at a loss to make out what she meant; finding that she continued, I cried out to her *Robe*, she nodded in the affirmative, and then picked up a stone, placed it in her gown, which she again laid hold of, raising the stone in the other hand. *Pierre*, I again cried out to her. Her joy was unbounded when she discovered that we at last understood her; and bringing her gown close to the stone she made quick and repeated signs of cutting her throat, and began to dance and applaud the act. This strange pantomime excited an emotion in our minds which it is impossible to describe, as we ventured to hope that it gave us the announcement of *Robespierre's* death.

“Whilst we were in this state of alternate fear and hope, we heard a great noise in the passage, and the formidable voice of the doorkeeper, who, giving a kick to his dog, said to the animal, ‘Will you move on, then, . . . Robespierre?’ This energetic phrase proved to us that we had nothing more to apprehend, and that France was rid of the tyrant.

“Accordingly, our companions in misfortune came in soon afterwards and gave us the details of that important event. The crisis of the 9th Thermidor had just passed away!

“My hammock was brought back to me, and I

never passed a quieter night; I fell asleep after repeating these words to my friends, ‘You see that I have not been guillotined; *I shall yet be Queen of France.*’ When I became Empress, I felt anxious to keep my word, and requested that Madame de Girardin might be allowed to be my Lady of Honour; the Emperor refused, because she had been *divorced*.*

“Such, ladies, is the exact truth respecting that celebrated prediction. I feel little alarmed at the concluding part of it; I lead here an agreeable and retired life, and do not at all interfere with politics; I do all the good in my power, and, therefore hope to die quietly in my bed. It is very true that Marie Antoinette — !”

Josephine stopped short, and the conversation was made to take another turn.

Since I have just mentioned the dreadful kind of death reserved for those who were so unfortunate as to be known in the world, I will briefly advert to the worthy man whose name has acquired so painful a celebrity. M. Guillotin, a learned physician, had invented, two years before, the instrument of death which he deemed best calculated to abridge the sufferings of the culprits condemned to forfeit their lives by the sentence of severe but just laws. His inven-

*The Emperor relaxed at a later period from this rigid rule. Madame de Girardin was named Lady of Honour of Madame Joseph, the Queen of Naples. She was destined to fall to the lot of a worthy and amiable Princess.

tion was laid hold of for the purpose of *dispatching* a greater number of victims. That was the expression used by a member of the Convention.

M. Guillotin, whom I have known in his old age, was inconsolable for what he considered as an involuntary blemish in his existence. His venerable countenance bore the impress of a settled gloom, and his hair of a snowy whiteness afforded a clear indication of his mental sufferings. He had aimed at relieving the sorrows of human nature, and he unintentionally contributed to the destruction of a greater number of human beings. Had they been put to death in a less expeditious manner, the people might have been soon wearied out by those executions, which they shewed the same eagerness to behold as they would have done a theatrical representation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Fragment of the Account of a Journey Performed by the Empress in 1808. — Her Arrival at Étampes. — Strange Present Made to Her. — The Emperor's Opinion Respecting the People of Orléans. — M. de Riccé. — M. de Vari-court. — Bayonne; Fête Given to the Emperor. — Don Pedro de Las Torres. — Mdle. Guillebeau.

THE following brief notes are the production of Josephine, and relate to the ever-memorable journey which she performed with the Emperor at the time of the first disturbances in Spain.

It has occurred to me that my readers would be glad to learn what were Her Majesty's remarks upon the various places which she visited. I have made no alteration in her style.

"We leave St. Cloud this evening, for the purpose of visiting the western part of France.

"I shall note down a few pencil observations.

"On arriving within a league and a half of Étampes, we were stopped by a crowd of young people of both sexes, some of whom presented cherries, and others roses, for our acceptance. The Emperor alighted at their village, and sent for the mayor and curate. The former is a jocular peasant, who chided the inhabitants on the nature of the presents they had offered.

“‘Handsome as they are,’ said the Emperor, ‘there is no doubt that an ear of corn and a bunch of grapes would have been more uncommon.’

“‘Here are three of each kind,’ replied the country magistrate; ‘they were plucked on the 29th of April; you will acknowledge, Sire, that we have lost no time.’

“‘Nature is favoured in this district,’ said the Emperor, presenting me with a nosegay; ‘accept it, madame, and let us never forget the people of whom Providence is so mindful.’

“‘Providence,’ added the curate, ‘never fails to reward those who exert themselves, because in so doing they obey the most important of its laws.’

“‘These people,’ replied the Emperor, ordering, at the same time, the carriage to proceed, ‘these people cultivate flowers as well as fruits; they combine the useful with the agreeable; they deserve to succeed.’ *

“AT ORLÉANS.

“The National Guard was under arms, and the public authorities in full costume. I perceived by the Emperor’s frowning that he was displeased.

“‘It is truly painful for me,’ he said, ‘to be obliged to speak harsh words in return for expressions of rejoicing; my reproaches, however, are not addressed to the people, but to the public authorities.

“‘They perform their duties improperly, or, rather, they do not perform them at all. In what manner have they applied the sums of money which I had granted for the Canal? The account rendered does not satisfy my doubts, and it must be

*I copy these notes word for word, without pretending to explain how it was possible to have corn and grapes in a state of maturity in the month of April.

drawn up afresh. Why are the two thousand acres of the regular grants of 1805 and 1806 wholly suppressed on the account of sales? I insist upon their being replaced. The national domains have fallen off for the last eighteen months; M. le Préfet, this was the period of your administration; from that moment every transaction has become complicated; what can be the cause of it? I am well aware that there exists in **this** place two opinions, as much opposed to the Government as they are to each other; I do not wish them to be quarrelled with, but if they should be followed by any outward acts, and **those** acts should **bear** the character of crimes, I will have **no** mercy for them.'

"After this reprimand, the Emperor assumed a milder tone and entered into familiar conversation with the Bishop, the Mayor, the President of the Imperial Court, and even the Prefect. The latter endeavoured to justify his conduct, but if facts can be contested to a certain extent, how can they be altogether set aside? It is but too true that in these departments of the Loiret the Jacobins and emigrants have been protected by turns. There is great need of a firm though neutral administration, which should only extend its protection to those who are deserving of it; intimidate none but the factiously inclined, and secure, at last, a peaceful liberty by causing the laws to be respected.*

*The wishes of Josephine had been partly fulfilled; the people of Orléans being of a speculating turn of mind, the stagnation of trade is the greatest misfortune that could happen to them; they are indifferent to the progress of industry and the fine arts. They still complain as they were wont to do in the days of the Republic, of the Consulate and of the Empire. Thirsting after gain, they are never satisfied with what they have acquired, and always look forward to a new order of things which might possibly be productive of results better calculated to gratify their impatient eagerness for wealth. If the Government were to be altered, they would still be dissatisfied. Such is the peculiarity of their character. Nevertheless, the prudent administration of the Vicomte de Riccé, their

"AT BORDEAUX.

"This city exhibits two very marked opinions, wholly distinct from each other, and in an inverse ratio to those which are to be found in the greater part of France. The people in general are attached to the Revolution. The privileged classes are alone opposed to its progress, or rather, they obstruct its results. These results display themselves in strongly-cemented and liberal institutions which time, the destroyer of everything, must have the effect of consolidating. In order to establish those institutions on the ruin of contending parties, there was need of the interference of a conqueror, who should assume the character of a legislator, and that such a legislator should continue his career of conquests. In the restoration of a State, all institutions are connected by a common link. It would not be sufficient to bind factions down by metamorphosing their passions into a community of interests; this would, at best, effect half the object in view, if neighbouring States were not made to promote those interests. In order to be master at home, and to enjoy domestic happiness and glory, it is necessary to remove all apprehension of your neighbours setting fire to your habitations, or even to their own, as well as to banish all dread of a lawsuit for a party-wall. What are the means to be employed in order to compel them to adopt a prudent course of conduct? They should first of all be compelled to submit, and when they shall have been made to feel and acknowledge your superiority, you should hold out to them a fraternal and protecting hand whose guardianship may calm their fears with-

Prefect, and the exhortations of their former Bishop, M. de Varicourt, whose memory is deservedly held in veneration, have greatly contributed to allay the discontent, and everything induces the belief that this city, which has always proved faithful, notwithstanding its habits of complaining, will return to those sentiments that animated it in former times.

out humbling their pride. This mutual attitude will create a reciprocal bond of confidence, respect, and affection. If, however, in the interior of those habitations, some egotists, instead of attending to the common defence, to the consolidation of the general establishment, should surreptitiously withdraw their resources to bestow them upon objects of local interest and of a private nature, are they not to be held up as enemies of that plan of general welfare which they find to interfere with their private views? Too narrow-minded to see beyond them, too near-sighted, too deficient in penetration to read into futurity, they would sacrifice everything to a present object, to the present moment, which necessarily undermines the future, when from a want of foresight and proper economy it fails to secure it. This doctrine, of which the Emperor has made the application to France, has been greeted with applause by that devoted France which was not slow in perceiving that a moment of changes, of trials and repairs, neither was nor could be the period of enjoyments.

“‘We are sowing to-day in tears and blood,’ said the Emperor to me; ‘liberty will be our harvest. This is what a spirit of mercantile egotism obscures from the sight of the people of Bordeaux. In an inverse ratio to the remainder of the Empire, the people here are opposed to the new institutions. It only sees one obstacle, not to commerce in general, but to its own trade. It is quite indifferent to the happiness of to-morrow; it merely seeks for to-day’s profit.’

“A few facts have confirmed these observations. On our way to the theatre we heard very few applauses from the crowd out-of-doors; within the theatre, on the contrary, they were loud and long continued.

“The port presents a magnificent *coup d’œil*. The ships were dressed with a variety of flags, and fired minute-guns. The artillery of the fort returned the salute. The whole pop-

ulation was in motion, and appeared cheerful, in spite of its discontented opinions. The confusion of cries, of songs, of movements and costumes, presented a delightful picture. We particularly noticed a Basque dance, formed of three hundred young people of both sexes, with short, brown jackets, blue trousers, red sashes, and straw hats decorated with ribbons and nosebags, who, dancing to the sound of instruments — castanets and tambourines — rushed forward, whirled about, and skipped, with no less swiftness than elegance.

“To-morrow we take our departure for Bayonne.

“AT BAYONNE.

“At the distance of two leagues from this town, the Emperor was presented with a sight truly worthy of him. On the side of a mountain gradually descending to a slope is to be seen one of those camps which the protecting genius of the country has erected for the retreat of its defenders. It consists of seven pretty habitations of different forms and aspects, isolated from each other and surrounded with fruitful orchards and well-stocked poultry-yards. They have a greater or less quantity of arable land attached to them at stated distances, which were sown with different kinds of grain, according to the nature of the soil. The mountain is guarded on one side by rocks hewn in a fantastic manner, to which are suspended plants and flowers presenting to the eye a variety of colours. The other side of the mountain appeared as if covered with rich carpets, that illusion being produced by the different colours of the plants cultivated upon it. An evergreen forest crowns the crest of this mountain, the basis of which is watered by a small river softly gliding through a narrow, deep, and verdant bed. An elegant bridge thrown across the river facilitates the communication of the camp with the town; and a few tents

erected on the bank, on the Bayonne side of the river, serve as a fortification to the dwellings and an ornament to the green field that surrounds them. This is the spot in front of those tents where the veterans who occupy them have given to the Emperor a small fête which partook of a rural and a military character. The wives, the daughters, the children of these gallant soldiers, formed its most pleasing attraction, as they themselves were its chief ornament. In the midst of their pile of arms were seen shrubs loaded with flowers; and whilst the mountains resounded with the lowing of the flocks, the air repeated the echoing songs of veterans, delighted at again beholding their chief amongst them. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds when the Emperor sat down to their military and pastoral repast, and drank with those gallant men who had one and all exposed their lives in defence of his cause.

“Toasts were drunk to the success of every object dear to Frenchmen: to the country, to glory, to liberty! Modesty prevents my recording the marked attentions shewn to me. They have made an indelible impression upon my mind, for I consider them as a reflection of the respect which France has devoted to the Emperor.

“An important personage was waiting at Bayonne the Emperor’s arrival: this was Don Pedro de las Torres, special envoy of Don Juan d’Escoïquiz, the preceptor of the Prince of Asturias. After the events of Aranjuez, the latter had been proclaimed King under the name of Ferdinand VII.; but the old King Charles, whose abdication was wrung from him by fear, now protests against his abdication. The new Monarch pretends that his father, influenced by the Queen, who is herself led by the Prince of the Peace, never had, nor could have, any will of his own. Nevertheless, the nation is in a state of alarm, and divided between the two Sovereigns. If the one party made it a reproach to Charles that he resigned his will

to Don Manuel Godoy (Prince of the Peace), the other party imputes to Ferdinand that he never followed any other dictates than those of Don Juan d'Escoïquiz. The former, who is proud and insolent, oppresses his master and degrades the nation; the latter, a *whining*, deceitful man, imposes upon the nation, and subjects his pupils to his views. Spain may well accuse them of her past and present misfortunes.

“What can be more deplorable, in fact, than the relative situation of the governors and the governed. There is a total absence of confidence on the one side, and of affection on the other. In the midst of these contending parties, which may well be termed parricidal factions, a third party insinuates itself, which calculates upon their misunderstanding, perhaps promotes it, and aims at introducing the reign of liberty!

“Is ignorant and superstitious Spain, however, in a condition to receive this beneficial improvement? How is it possible, with her proud aristocracy, her fanatical priesthood, and her indolent population, to accomplish an object which presupposes the love of equality, the practice of toleration, and an heroic spirit of active industry?

“This is what the Emperor will have to consider. All parties call upon him as a mediator; he arrives among them without knowing their respective characters, and as a man he feels a perfect indifference for them all. His enlightened policy will take counsel from the laws of necessity; and in this mighty dispute in which he will be called upon to act as umpire, he will conciliate what he owes to the interests of France with what is imperiously required by the welfare of Spain.

“This Don Pedro de las Torres has not been sent without a motive. Don Juan, his employer, was aware that he possesses, at a short distance from Bayonne, a spacious farm on which he rears numerous flocks of Merino sheep. This is the place

to which we were invited, under some plausible pretext. At the conclusion of a splendid rural repast we walked round his habitation. At the bottom of a verdant neck of land, bordered on all sides by rocks lined with moss and roses, we beheld on a sudden a picturesque cottage slightly suspended on a projecting rock, with seven or eight hundred sheep of the finest species around it. We could not resist an exclamation of surprise, and upon the Emperor's addressing his compliments to Don Pedro, this nobleman assured him that those flocks were our property.

“‘The King, my master,’ he added, ‘is well aware of the predilection of Her Majesty the Empress for rural occupations, and as this species of sheep, so little known in France, might now prove the chief ornament of a farm, as it would hereafter prove its chief wealth, he requests that Your Majesty will not reject an offer which may be equally acceptable and useful to the French nation.’

“‘Don Pedro,’ replied the Emperor, in a severe tone of voice, ‘the Empress can only accept a present from the hands of a King, and your master does not yet wear the kingly title. Postpone offering it to her until your nation and I shall have pronounced.’ The remainder of the visit became purely ceremonious.

“We reside at the Castle of Marac, where an occurrence has just taken place which is exceedingly painful to my feelings, for I always dread any act of violence on the part of the Emperor, as so many people are disposed to exaggerate his errors and defects, and endeavour to lessen the merit of his good actions. What I am about to relate will afford matter for a variety of stories, the bare anticipation of which is distressing to me.

“I have brought with me, as my Ladies of Honour, the Duchesse de Bassano, the Comtesse de Montmorency, and the

beautiful Mdle. Guillebeau as my reader ;* having but lately received the appointment, she was still intoxicated with this mark of favour, and assumed a highly unbecoming and insolent manner towards those two ladies, who complained to me of a conduct to which they were unaccustomed. I prevailed upon them to forgive errors which were to be ascribed to her unexpected rise and extreme youth, and I promised at the same time to chide Mdle. Guillebeau. Accordingly, I made some representations to her which she did not take amiss, and which she promised to attend to. I am at a loss to discover how the Emperor came to be informed of this little piece of vexation ; but he was so displeased at it that he ordered Mdle. Guillebeau to return immediately to Paris with MM. de Beaumont and Monaco. I felt anxious to provide her at least with a *femme de chambre*, in order to soften the unpleasantness of this precipitate journey ; but the Emperor requested, in a tone of ill humour, that his orders should be *strictly* carried into effect. I was, therefore, under the necessity of seeing this young lady take her departure with these two gentlemen, and without any female attendant. She never ceased crying the whole of the journey, and never afterwards resumed her place in my household."

I have been unable to procure the concluding part of these notes ; but the short specimens I have

* Mdle. Guillebeau was the daughter of a banker who had failed. Her great beauty attracted the Emperor's notice at one of the city balls. He inquired into the condition of her parents, promised to be of service to them, and appointed her to be reader to the Empress. Her sister received a similar appointment near the Princesse Élisabeth, who procured for her an highly advantageous match. Mdle. Guillebeau, the Empress's reader, married M. Sourdeau, a consul at Tangier, and not at Smyrna, as is asserted in the *Contemporaine*. She died a short time ago.

obtained and presented to the readers sufficiently attest the correct judgment of the Empress, and her strong attachment to the Emperor, facts so obstinately denied with the perpetual assurance that she was only attached to the supreme power to which he had raised her. Those who make these assertions have probably never been personally acquainted with Her Majesty. I always found her penetrated with the deepest gratitude towards the Emperor, and ready at all times to prove her affection for him by every sacrifice that depended upon her.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Unaccountable Disturbance in Her Majesty's Household.— Her Displeasure at the Circumstance.— M. de Monaco.— Particulars Respecting the Duc d'Enghien.— The Infernal Machine.— Général Macdonald and de Nansouty.— Institution of the Legion of Honour.— Saying of Général Moreau on the Subject.— Madame de Nansouty.

THE Empress called one morning upon Madame d'Arberg, who was confined by illness to her room. She was in a state bordering upon anger, and we were so unaccustomed to see her thrown out of her usual composure that we felt much surprised at her agitation of mind. She told us that she had just had a warm discussion with her chief steward, who insisted that it was impossible to have fewer than *twenty-two tables* separately served, as there was in the lower class of her household a gradation of rank infinitely more remarkable than in Her Majesty's salon.

“Can you imagine, ladies, anything equal to the wasteful extravagance to which I am thus exposed? Is it possible that the cooks should refuse to eat with the kitchen-maids and scullions? the servants who scrub the floors, with those who light the fires? As

the ladies who announce the company do not dine at my table, your waiting-maids conceive it to be beneath their dignity to sit down to dinner with them. In short, I am ruined by such antechamber etiquette. Madame d' Arberg, all this must be set to rights."

This lady promised to give her best attention to the matter; nevertheless, she could only succeed in reducing six tables; *sixteen* were constantly kept up. This was an unaccountable number, considering that the footmen and stable boys were not supported in the palace.

The waste of wood at Navarre almost exceeds belief; twenty-one loads in winter time, and twelve caldrons of coals, were daily consumed. Our apartments were large beyond all proportion, and the chimneys, which had not been altered since the Revolution, were so large and spacious that one might stand upright in them with the greatest ease. Whole stumps of trees were thrown in; the Empress always recommended that we should take care to keep out the cold. But in spite of the immense fires lighted, we were perishing in every part of the house, except on the ground floor, which was inhabited by Her Majesty. A mild and even temperature was kept up in them by pipes for conveying heat, which proceeded from stoves fixed in the cellars of the building.

The Empress was constantly intent upon the means of providing every comfort which the palace could

afford, and always felt apprehensive lest a sense of delicacy should prevent application being made for what might be deemed requisite or useful. She was greatly annoyed at the furniture being so old and uncomfortable, but she had purchased it without a previous examination. As she placed the utmost dependence upon M. Pierlot, she had felt no hesitation in relying upon his choice. The purchase was agreed to for the sum of 100,000 francs, and when she came for the purpose of taking possession, she saw nothing better than armchairs with torn covers, broken tables, and curtains in tatters. It was found necessary to order cart-loads of furniture from Paris; nevertheless, many articles were still wanting, which were purchased by degrees. The furniture of Her Majesty's apartment was tasteful and quite new, but exceedingly plain.

M. de Monaco, the present Duc de Valentinois, had fitted up his own apartment with greater attention to nicety than any one else in the household. He was feared by all those who were dependent upon him. His immediate attendants always styled him *Prince*, an affectation which subjected him to general animadversion, as he could only claim the title of *Count*, which the Emperor had conferred upon him. Whenever he undertook a journey to Paris, he travelled in one of Her Majesty's carriages, drawn by six horses, with an outrider and a courier before him. Madame

d'Arberg and M. de Beaumont were far more unpretending, though they held the first situations in the household. The Empress ridiculed this foolish pride, but she never took the trouble to remind him that his family no longer enjoyed the privilege of striking a few pieces of coin, or of raising three armed men. She merely laughed at such petty whims, which were redeemed by a thorough knowledge of every detail connected with her service. She was aware that he was suffering from the consequences of some severe wounds he had received in battles in which he had greatly distinguished himself; this motive sufficiently pleaded his excuse, and when, at a later period, she was under the necessity of dispensing with his attendance upon her, as I shall have occasion to relate, she deeply regretted his loss.

It was a source of unfeigned mortification for her to be obliged to convey a reprimand; her excessive gentleness of temper was often abused in trifles; fortunately, however, this could not be the case in matters of greater importance, thanks to Madame d'Arberg, who had acquired a well-merited ascendancy over her. When her influence was inadequate to the object of preventing what was calculated to affect Her Majesty's interests, Madame d'Arberg addressed herself to the Emperor, who always agreed in opinion with her, being well aware of the excessive weakness of the Empress whenever it was a question

of her private affairs, or of punishing any one who had been guilty of misconduct. She was sometimes displeased at being thus thwarted in her inclinations, but she soon felt how undeserved was her anger towards a person sincerely devoted to her service; she would then exert the most graceful and persuasive means to dispel the transient cloud which had affected Madame d'Arberg's serenity of temper. The latter felt grateful for Josephine's endeavours to make her forget any slight act of injustice, and the two *friends* grew more than ever attached to each other. I repeat that Her Majesty was exclusively indebted to Madame d'Arberg for the strict regularity established in her household.

The conversation in presence of the Empress turned upon the ever to be deplored event which plunged France into sorrow, and tarnished the glory of Napoleon. We formed a select circle on that occasion, and she lamented with deep regret her not having had it in her power to prevent the catastrophe.

"The Emperor," she said, "was cruelly advised; he never would of his own accord have entertained the thought of such an attempt; once resolved upon, nothing could any longer oppose its being carried into execution, owing to the Emperor's apprehension of his being accused of pusillanimity, but I am persuaded that he has more than once deplored his

having been *too readily* obeyed. There are certain circumstances which *I am bound to abstain from mentioning*, in order to spare from infamy the names of the real authors of the Duc d'Enghien's death; *history will hereafter speak out*, and the truth will be made known. General Moreau, however, was the innocent cause of that sanguinary adventure.

"In the course of conversation with him, Napoleon asked certain questions respecting the Bourbons, and whether there was to be found a single warlike character in that family?"

"Certainly, general, they are all men of personal courage! The Duc d'Enghien is, moreover, an excellent officer, and is adored by his soldiers; he is a worthy scion of the branch of Condé."

"Is he ambitious?"

"I am unable to answer that question, but from his gallant conduct on the field of battle he seems to aim at a renown which cannot confine itself to the object of serving at a distance from his native country."

"This eulogium," added Josephine, "was a source of uneasiness to the Emperor, who frequently reverted to the subject. With the view of calming his apprehensions, the perpetration of a crime was proposed to him. I must ever hold in abhorrence those who drove him to it; *they have proved his greatest enemies!*"

She assured us that M. de Caulaincourt was perfectly ignorant of the nature of the orders of which he was the bearer ; he only learned their contents on his arrival at Ettenheim, and was in a state of despair at being directed to arrest the Duc d'Enghien ; but he was so closely watched that he was unable to retrace his steps, and was compelled to obey. Feeling, however, an enthusiastic attachment for his master, he deemed him quite incapable of an action which would have the effect of weakening the general admiration in which he was held ; accordingly, when Napoleon informed him in his cabinet that the Duc d'Enghien had been shot, M. de Caulaincourt fell senseless to the ground.

Josephine and General Berthier were present ; the latter, to avoid being asked any questions, went immediately in search of assistance. M. de Caulaincourt's grief knew no bounds, and he *bitterly* accused the Emperor for having entrusted him with that dreadful mission. It was to have been confided to M. Auguste de Colbert, who, fortunately for him, had gone to the opera without leaving word at his residence where he was to be found, and every inquiry after him proved unsuccessful ; anxious to give effect to the orders which were represented to him as requisite to secure his repose, Napoleon gave the fatal commission to M. de Caulaincourt, who happened to be in his way. An incredible fatality attended him

in the whole business. What I have just related is nearly *word for word* what Josephine mentioned to us.

We also questioned her concerning the event of the 3d Nivose. The infernal machine had been so well contrived that Napoleon was indebted for his life to the violent rate at which he was driven by his coachman, who was drunk. Madame Murat, whose carriage was to have followed immediately after her brother, was preserved from death owing to a contrary cause.

General Lauriston was relating an entertaining story, and as the ladies wished to hear it out they were in no hurry to proceed; two or three minutes elapsed, and the explosion took place just as they entered the Place du Carrousel. Every glass of Madame Murat's carriage was broken by the effect of the explosion. She was pregnant of her eldest son, and experienced such a shock that the child was born of a very delicate frame. The epileptic attacks to which he is subject are to be ascribed to this circumstance. The explosion took place in the interval between the two carriages.

Napoleon still proceeded on his way, and repaired to the opera, where the splendid oratorio of "The Creation" * was to be performed for the first time. He was greeted with loud and unanimous applause. He felt the deepest anxiety for the fate of his sister,

* By Haydn.

who only arrived a quarter of an hour after him, her alarm having compelled her to return to the Tuileries. The cause of the extraordinary report which had been heard was already known at the theatre, and Madame Murat was enthusiastically received when she made her appearance.

The whole city was indignant at such an attempt, which not only threatened the life of Bonaparte's family, but devoted a multitude of people to certain death. Fresh details were brought in every moment respecting that dreadful catastrophe; hundreds of persons were mentioned as having fallen victims to it. Numberless arrests took place; and the police, which was already sufficiently strict, became so much more severe that people were apprehensive of conversing in the streets. I am persuaded that many persons who were implicated in the trial were totally ignorant of the means by which it had been attempted to get rid of the Consul.

Georges Cadoudal, a man devoted to the cause he had espoused, and prepared to suffer death in endeavouring to rescue his country from usurpation, and to restore the throne to its legitimate Sovereign, had not, however, the resolution to act the part of an assassin. Having on one occasion assumed the disguise of a disabled soldier, and watching on the Pont-des-Arts until Bonaparte should pass, he had it in his power to execute the project he had formed, as the

Consul entered into a long conversation with him ; his dagger was in readiness for the deed, but his resolution failed him. This hesitation caused the misfortune of upwards of two hundred families.

The Empress, who was partial to Général Moreau, and knew how much he was beloved by the army, trembled with apprehension at the possibility of sentence of death being pronounced against him ; the tribunal did not venture to extend a measure of such severity to him. The example of Général Macdonald and de Nansouty,* who had the courage, in an open sitting of the Court, to bestow upon their captive friend public marks of the tenderest affection, was followed by several others of his companions in arms. It was found necessary to consult the feelings of men whose services were needed at every

* The Emperor retained for a long time an unfavourable impression against those two generals ; they remained unemployed, and proved by their conduct in the field, at a later period, how unfortunate it was for the service that a feeling of animosity should have operated as a bar to the employment of two such distinguished officers. At the time of the formation of her household, the Empress requested that Madame de Nansouty might be appointed one of her Ladies of Honour. " Her husband is too poor," replied the Emperor. " Sire, this is the best encomium upon his conduct ; it depended upon him to acquire wealth in Hanover ; he abstained from doing so." " So much the worse for him ; I had sent him there for that purpose. I wish to have women at the palace who may adorn my court by their appearance and the splendour of their attire." It was found impossible to make him retract his determination ; Madame de Nansouty was not appointed a Lady of Honour. Some years afterwards, the Emperor did justice to the distinguished talents and dignified character of Général de Nansouty, and attached him to his person in the capacity of his first equerry.

moment for securing, by dint of glorious achievements, what had been denied to justice and equity. The ruling power, therefore, merely sentenced a great captain to banishment, feeling persuaded that French levity would soon cause him to be totally forgotten. It is well known that the gendarmes, when he passed before them to repair to the bench of the accused, invariably presented arms.

A short time before this disastrous occurrence, when the Legion of Honour was about to be created, Moreau was apprised that there was no doubt of his receiving the grand cross of that order.

“I am not acquainted with any legion of honour, except the army,” replied the general, “and I have long formed part of it. I have no more claim to the cross you allude to than the rest of my companions in arms; I will never, therefore, accept of it. I am opposed to every kind of privileges.”

These words were reported to Napoleon, who foresaw from that moment that he would find in Moreau a censor of all the projects he meditated for the future; he never forgave him a spirit of opposition in which that general stood alone against him. Those who had solicited and obtained the decoration felt offended at Moreau's conduct, which conveyed a censure upon their own; the unsuccessful candidates, on the contrary, adopted his opinion, and thus formed themselves into a party, which the enemies of his

splendid fame represented to the Consul as calculated to produce dangerous consequences. Josephine interpreted in this manner the dissension that sprung up between two men who were worthy of entertaining for each other a mutual esteem.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Empress Alludes to the Time of Her Pecuniary Distress.

— Mesdames Dumoulin and Montmorin. — Madame Tallien. — Josephine's Letter. — Ungrateful Conduct of the Marquise de ———. — Charming Reply of Madame Tallien. — Madame de Boufflers. — M. de Sabran. — Mdle. Thermidor Tallien. — Saying of Tallien.

THE Empress often spoke of the time in which she had been in distressed circumstances; she always entertained a grateful recollection of the services rendered to her at that period. She had been most affected by the attentions shewn to her by Madame Dumoulin, a wealthy and benevolent lady, and felt great delight in often adverting to the subject. At the period of the general scarcity, Madame de Beauharnais dined every day at the house of that excellent lady, who regularly invited a small circle of friends of very limited fortune; each guest brought her own bread, which was at that time an object of luxury.

Aware that Madame de Beauharnais was in more distressed circumstances than the rest, Madame Dumoulin dispensed with this practice in her favour, thereby justifying the expression of the latter, that she received *her daily bread* from her. Madame de

Montmorin, who formed part of that society, took a great liking to a person for whom it was impossible not to feel an affection, and procured her every article of wearing apparel of which she stood in need. The Empress afterwards treated her in that friendly manner which sufficiently indicated that Her Majesty was not prone to forget.

She often spoke, likewise, of her affection for Madame Tallien. The Emperor would never allow Josephine to receive her at the Tuileries; but I have no doubt that she secretly saw her at Malmaison. She was compelled to throw over these visits the cloak of mystery, as Napoleon would have been displeased at them; if they ever came to his knowledge, he feigned ignorance, his object being answered if the Empress should not openly transgress his injunctions. The intimacy subsisting between these two celebrated women was of an early date. The following letter of the Empress will afford some idea of her lively turn of mind at a time when her position was far from being enviable:

“TO MADAME TALLIEN.

“A splendid evening party at Thellusson’s residence forms the present topic of conversation; I do not ask you, my dear friend, if you intend to be there. The fête would be very insipid without you. I write to request you will appear in that peach-blossom dress you are so fond of, and to which I am no less partial than yourself; I intend to wear the same. As

I think it of importance that our head-dresses should in all respects be alike, I now state for your information that I propose wearing a red handkerchief in my hair, tied in the Creole fashion, with three locks on each side of the head. That which is a presumption on my part is quite natural on yours, as you are younger, and if not handsomer, still of a much fresher complexion. You perceive I do justice to every one. We are, however, attempting a bold thrust, and must drive the *trois Bichons*, and the *Bretelles Anglaises** to despair. You fully understand the importance of this conspiracy, the necessity for secrecy, and the wonderful effects which must attend it. Farewell, until to-morrow; I rely upon you."

Madame Tallien rendered an essential service to France, by contributing to rescue it from thralldom. She possessed at one time a very powerful influence, of which she availed herself to save the lives of many individuals doomed to destruction. The following anecdote will prove the extent of her zeal in the cause of humanity, and her obliging disposition:

The Marquise de ——— was kept concealed for *three weeks* in Madame Tallien's private apartment, unknown to her very *femme de chambre*; she attended upon her with as much care as if she had been accustomed to the meanest domestic employments, at a time when she bore the palm of unrivalled beauty, and was the object of general admiration and of the

*Names applied to certain persons in society. The latter was meant for a handsome Englishwoman, who was afterwards called Madame B. V —

most extravagant praise. She secretly removed from her table what was necessary to support her prisoner, or brought in provisions from out-of-doors, which she carefully concealed under her shawl.

Such unheard-of precautions and difficulties were attended with the gratifying result of the Marquise de —— being restored to liberty, and reinstated in a portion of her property. Nothing could exceed for a time the gratitude of the lady she had so essentially served. She was eager to express it on all occasions, and felt no hesitation at importuning *her friend and benefactress* by frequent applications. Bonaparte seized upon the supreme power ; Madame Tallien lost her influence, and was no longer favoured from that moment with the visits of the person upon whom she was justified in relying as if she had been a sister. She was deeply affected at so revolting a mark of ingratitude, and complained of it to a friend, who, on learning the cause of her disappointment, called upon the Marquise de —— to make her devise some excuse for her absence, and to recommend her calling upon a lady who had saved her life.

“ This is most assuredly my intention, monsieur. I hold ingratitude in abhorrence, am greatly indebted to Madame Tallien, and am ready to prove my gratitude by calling upon her. She must be sensible, however, that I owe some consideration to my family, and out of regard to my character I am compelled to act with

a degree of circumspection which is painful to my feelings. Ask her at what hour I may find her alone, and I will instantly call upon her."

The officious meddler, who had adopted a course which was attended with such little success, thought proper to complete his self-assumed mission, and reported to Madame Tallien what were the intentions of Madame de ———.

"Tell her," replied Madame Tallien, "that I sincerely regret my inability to receive her, as I am never alone, and am constantly surrounded by those to whom it has been my good fortune to be of service."

Madame de ——— took the hint, and never returned to a house which had proved an asylum to her at a time when death was generally the reward of an act of compassion.

If it be painful to record traits of this nature, there is some consolation in contrasting them with a praiseworthy action. Madame de Boufflers, the wife of one of our wittiest songsters, had contracted a debt of gratitude towards Madame Tallien. She was constant in her attendance upon the latter, and contributed by her wit to the charms of a cheerful conversation. She was accompanied by her husband and her son, M. Elzéar de Sabran, to whom I have already had occasion to allude. They declined every invitation that might have interfered with their visits to Madame Tallien. The conduct of a family so gener-

ally esteemed was applauded by every one. Gratitude should on no occasion assume a disguise. The anxiety to raise in public opinion the object towards whom that feeling is entertained is calculated to confer honour and self-esteem.*

The Empress defrayed the expenses of the education of Mdlle. Tallien, whose Christian name was Thermidor. She is now Comtesse de Pelet, and is said to possess as playful a wit as her mother, the present Princesse de Chimay.

On learning the marriage of the latter, M. Tallien said: "In spite of herself, she will ever be Madame Tallien. This name will always obtain more celebrity for her than the title of Princesse de *Chimera*."

* The Empress preserved with great care a collection of letters from Madame Tallien and several other celebrated characters. I believe she was the person who brought into fashion the collection of autographs. I have seen a very curious collection of the kind, which contains amongst others a letter of Lucien Bonaparte, dated from the prison at Aix, where he had just been confined as a *terrorist*. Mesdames Letitia and Élisabeth Bonaparte added their solicitations to those of Lucien in separate letters. Those autograph letters which are in the possession of the Comtesse de Bradi are intended to be published by her, with brief notes. As I am on intimate terms with Madame de Bradi, my praises might be considered as exaggerated, if I stated my opinion of her talents; I may, however, be allowed to say that no person is better qualified than she is to convey a character of interest to such a publication. I find some consolation in checking the expression of my sentiments of friendship for the Comtesse de Bradi, when I reflect that her works are in the hands of the public, and that the merits of that unassuming and excellent lady are duly appreciated.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Empress is Desirous of Learning the Origin of the Fortune of M. Portalès. — Adventure of the Herring Fishery. — The Sons of M. Portalès. — Present from Their Father. — Madame Guizot. — Countess Grabowska.

THE Empress expressed a desire to learn how M. Portalès, the father of her equerry, had succeeded in acquiring his immense fortune, as he was well known to have begun life as a pedlar. She was told the following details, which are sufficiently curious to merit a place in my recollections. Everything is interesting that relates in any way to an honest man.

M. Portalès was a native of Neuchâtel, in Switzerland. Born of worthy but indigent parents, he received from his father a small sum of money with which he purchased a variety of articles in use among the peasantry. He travelled in this manner about the country, leading a frugal life, and increasing his trade in proportion as his profits allowed him the means of so doing.

The proofs he had given of his capacity for business, his undeviating probity, his strict adherence to his engagements, and the correctness of his private life, induced some merchants to interest themselves in his

welfare; they confided their merchandise to his care, and thereby gave such extension to his means of carrying on business, that he was soon under the necessity of procuring a horse to carry his stock of goods, which had become too heavy for his shoulders.

After a lapse of a few years, the petty tradesman set up a gig in which he repaired to all the fairs, making moderate profits, but never embarking in doubtful speculations. When he had completely reimbursed all the advances made to him, he set to work with his own funds, and soon found himself possessed of a fortune which could only go on increasing, as the reputation he enjoyed was calculated to favour all his undertakings. Matters went so far that no business of any importance was entered into without his participating in it. He engaged a few clerks and opened a banking-house, without, however, allowing of any augmentation to his personal expenses.

When he had cause to be satisfied with any young man in his service, he gave him a share in his speculations. To have learned commercial business under M. Portalès was always a powerful recommendation, and offered ready means of forming an establishment. Several bankers, M. Hottinguer amongst the rest, were indebted to him for their fortunes.

Previously to the Revolution, M. Portalès constantly repaired to Amsterdam for the purpose of

attending the sales of the company. If his arrival happened to be delayed by any unexpected occurrence, the sales were generally suspended for one or two days. It happened on one occasion that the whole of the herring fishery was purchased in his absence. This is an object of great importance in Holland, as the herrings are forwarded from that country to all parts of the world. M. Portalès arrived at the moment when the sale was concluded, and all his competitors apologized for having omitted to give him a share in the commercial operation.

“There is no harm done, gentlemen; I am very sure you will not do so another time.”

He immediately hurried off with a few clerks to all the coopers, and purchased every barrel in the place. The herrings arrived; the purchasers proceeded to secure the barrels requisite for packing them up, and received for answer that M. Portalès had bought and paid for every one. As, however, the boats were entering the port in regular succession, the merchants were at a loss how to dispose of the immense quantity of herrings which were unloaded on the quays, and were compelled to apply to the monopoliser of barrels. He gained a hundred per cent. on that speculation, and took great delight in relating it as a boyish trick, which served as a lesson to the whole trading community; they never embarked any more in such speculations without his being allowed to participate in them.

He married a wife of a disposition congenial to his own, and had three sons by her, to whom he procured a finished education, which was not thrown away upon them. One son, only, felt a *vocation* for his father's business. The eldest never quitted Neufchâtel. The second established himself in Paris, where he spent large sums of money in eager pursuit of the fine arts, which he cultivates and patronizes; it was only in obedience to his father's wishes that he attended to bookkeeping, accounts current, and the like. He infinitely preferred visiting the shops of our celebrated painters and sculptors; travelling to Italy for the purpose of admiring the ruins of all ancient monuments, which recall such glorious recollections to mind. and surrounding himself with poets and musicians. In a word, he carried on business as an amateur, and attended, as an artist, to every object calculated to elevate the soul and delight the heart. The youngest son expressed a decided predilection for a military life; nothing could ever shake his inflexible determination on the subject. He distinguished himself in the most perilous campaigns of the Empire, obtained promotion, and was named equerry to Josephine, when, satiated with glory, he felt anxious to enjoy some repose.

The two last-mentioned sons were constantly annoying their father for money; vexed at being so often called upon to provide for what he termed their

nonsensical trifles, he one day called his three sons together, and, after a long sermon on the necessity of economizing and providing for the future, he told them that, feeling annoyed at having always his purse in hand for their gratification, he preferred giving them, once for all, wherewith to enable them to dispense, for a long time, with his assistance.

“ You have here,” he added, in an angry tone, “ a portfolio containing 9,000,000 of francs in notes; divide them in equal portions amongst you, and let me hear no more of you until the hour of my death.”

The man who evinced such readiness in distributing an enormous sum of money was exceedingly penurious in his private habits, having no other attendants than a cook, and a man servant to take care of his only horse. His children were under the necessity of giving him timely notice when they wished to dine with him; were it not for this precaution, they would have found nothing to eat.

Whenever he returned home, he took off his great coat to avoid wearing out his sleeves whilst in the act of writing, and only treated himself to a single candle; in short, every ridiculous story that is related of Harpagon is a faithful description of the habits of M. Portalès. Nevertheless, this very man was always ready to advance thirty or forty thousand francs to any one whom he might deem worthy of his con-

fidence, and to open a credit for him with his correspondents. He was passionately attached to his native town, and having considered that an hospital was essentially necessary for the indigent class of society, which he always sought to relieve, he sent for an architect to draw the plan of the most commodious establishment of the kind which he could devise, purchased the ground, and built the Hospital Portalès, which cost him 900,000 francs, including the funds placed in deposit in order to realize the income requisite for providing medicines and attendance.

A road from Neuchâtel to St. Gall was deemed indispensable, but the cantons of Neuchâtel and of St. Gall had not the means of cutting it, although such a road was calculated to give a great impulse to their reciprocal trade; M. Portalès took the whole expense upon himself. It may, assuredly, be permitted to an individual to lead a parsimonious life when his savings are employed in *such fancies*. Switzerland could likewise boast of her Beaujon. The properties of both were acquired by assiduous attention to business, and partly applied to the relief of the distressed. Such men are but too scarce, and seldom find imitators; this, at least, may be said, that all are agreed in admiring their noble conduct.

M. Portalès was much displeased at the desire felt by his sons to dignify, by a title of nobility, a name respected all over Europe.

“I am the first merchant in the world,” said he to Josephine; “they will be the lowest on the list of French Counts! I prefer my title to theirs.”

He left a considerable fortune, notwithstanding his numerous legacies to the churches and the poor of his native country. I have never known him, and the above details were communicated to me by the Empress herself, who entertained the highest respect for him; she never alluded to the avaricious disposition which was made a matter of reproach to M. Portalès, but as affording her the opportunity of dwelling upon his numerous benefactions. When she entertained a regard for any one, she felt great delight in alluding to those qualities which had excited that sentiment in her breast.

This was the language she held to us respecting the praiseworthy conduct of her chamberlain, M. Turpin de Crissé, who had supported his mother and sister during the emigration, by means of his well-known talent for painting. They alone communicated what would have always remained a secret had it depended on M. de Turpin's inclination. So far from priding himself upon what he did, he was always vexed and mortified whenever the circumstance was mentioned in his presence. As he deemed it quite natural that he should impose privations upon himself in order to afford comforts to the objects of his affection, he was at a loss to understand how such

an act should be noticed, and immediately quoted various examples of similar attachment, with the view of lessening the merit of his own conduct.

He alluded more particularly to Mdlle. de Meulan (afterwards Madame Guizot), who, notwithstanding her weak and delicate health, deprived herself of rest in order to compose for the press the articles which she wrote for insertion in the *Publiciste*, a publication much in vogue twenty years ago for all matters connected with literature. She had to read the works which she analyzed, to commit her opinions to paper, correct the proofs, and find time to instruct her young brother and a sister — whom she tended as a parent — to mind the housekeeping business, and calculate the most trifling expense, since a large fortune had been lost, and it was necessary to provide for every want. Not the slightest reproach or complaint on her part ever gave her family to suppose that she was exhausted by the duties she had imposed upon herself. She refused many brilliant offers under the apprehension that by marrying she might deprive those who were so dear to her of the advantages they derived from her assiduous attentions. She never attended to her establishment in life until their own had been secured. She found with M. Guizot that happiness she was so deserving of, and which was of too brief enjoyment.

The Empress quoted another remarkable trait of

filial piety, exhibited by Mdle. de Bethisy,* who, in order to save some remnants of the fortune of her emigrant parents, returned alone to France at the age of sixteen, became the nurse of her good old aunt, Madame Dumoulin, the friend of Josephine, was incessant in her endeavours to procure a decree for raising the sequester, succeeded in recovering the possession of some property, and transmitted to her father the produce of it, which he divided with his son, the Comte de Bethisy, who lately died governor of the Tuileries. Madame Dumoulin was so much affected at the kind attentions of her niece, who declined every invitation in order to keep company with an aged woman in a state of constant bodily suffering, that she left her *the whole of her property* by will. Mdle. de Bethisy instantly resigned to her father and her brother *two-thirds* of that inheritance. Such disinterested conduct does not convey an adequate idea of this lady, whose wit is the theme of general admiration, because it is not in her power to conceal it, while her uniform kindness of disposition can be appreciated only by those who know her. She never speaks of self nor of the good actions she performs, any more than of the numerous sacrifices she submits to for the advantage of her family. She has been, throughout her life, unremitting in her endeavours to please her parents, who, it is said, were far

* Comtesse de Grabowska.

from duly appreciating the extent of her exertions in their behalf. It is further reported that a marked preference for their son was the occasion of constant uneasiness to Madame de Grabowska. Such ingratitude appears to me so unnatural that I prefer disbelieving it, and hoping, on the contrary, that Madame de Grabowska has received from them the testimonies of attachment to which she had so just a claim. I am quite certain, at least, that she derives from her two sons all the happiness which it was her constant endeavour to procure to her own parents; their becoming conduct in the service, their mental accomplishments and talents, are a just reward for the care which their mother bestowed upon their education.

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